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London Published as the Act directs Feb.y 1.st 1790. by W. Strahan & T. Cadell.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE.

By EDWARD GIBBON, Esq.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed by A. Strahan, Printers Street,
FOR T. CADELL JUN. AND W. DAVIES, IN THE STRAND.

1802.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE CANTONALE
LAUSANNE
ET UNIVERSITAIRE

PREFACE.

IT is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety, or the importance of the ſubject, which I have undertaken to treat; ſince the merit of the choice would ſerve to render the weakneſs of the execution ſtill more apparent, and ſtill leſs excuſable. But as I have preſumed to lay before the Public a *firſt* volume only[1] of the Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, it will perhaps be expected that I ſhould explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

The memorable ſeries of revolutions, which, in the courſe of about thirteen centuries, gradually undermined, and at length deſtroyed, the ſolid fabric of human greatneſs, may, with ſome propriety, be divided into the three following periods:

[1] The firſt volume of the quarto, which is now contained in the two firſt volumes of the octavo, edition.

I. The firſt of theſe periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full ſtrength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and will extend to the ſubverſion of the Weſtern Empire, by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude anceſtors of the moſt poliſhed nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which ſubjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the ſixth century.

II. The ſecond period of the Decline and Fall of Rome, may be ſuppoſed to commence with the reign of Juſtinian, who by his laws, as well as by his victories, reſtored a tranſient ſplendour to the Eaſtern Empire. It will comprehend the invaſion of Italy by the Lombards; the conqueſt of the Aſiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Roman people againſt the feeble princes of Conſtantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year eight hundred, eſtabliſhed the ſecond, or German Empire of the Weſt.

III. The laſt and longeſt of theſe periods includes about ſix centuries and a half; from the

the revival of the Weſtern Empire, till the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to aſſume the titles of Cæſar and Auguſtus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a ſingle city; in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans, had been long ſince forgotten. The writer who ſhould undertake to relate the events of this period, would find himſelf obliged to enter into the general hiſtory of the Cruſades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek Empire; and he would ſcarcely be able to reſtrain his curioſity from making ſome inquiry into the ſtate of the city of Rome, during the darkneſs and confuſion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too haſtily, to commit to the preſs, a work, which, in every ſenſe of the word, deſerves the epithet of imperfect, I conſider myſelf as contracting an engagement to finiſh, moſt probably in a ſecond volume[2], the firſt of theſe memorable periods; and to deliver to the Public, the complete Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of

[2] The Author, as it frequently happens, took an inadequate meaſure of his growing work. The remainder of the firſt period has filled *two* volumes in quarto, being the third, fourth, fifth, and ſixth volumes of the octavo edition.

Rome,

Rome, from the age of the Antonines, to the ſubverſion of the Weſtern Empire. With regard to the ſubſequent periods, though I may entertain ſome hopes, I dare not preſume to give any aſſurances. The execution of the extenſive plan which I have deſcribed, would connect the ancient and modern hiſtory of the World: but it would require many years of health, of leiſure, and of perſeverance.

BENTINCK-STREET,
February 1, 1776.

P. S. The entire Hiſtory, which is now publiſhed, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the Weſt, abundantly diſcharges my engagements with the Public. Perhaps their favourable opinion may encourage me to proſecute a work, which, however laborious it may ſeem, is the moſt agreeable occupation of my leiſure hours.

BENTINCK-STREET,
March 1, 1781.

An Author eaſily perſuades himſelf that the public opinion is ſtill favourable to his labours; and

and I have now embraced the ſerious reſolution of proceeding to the laſt period of my original deſign, and of the Roman Empire, the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks, in the year one thouſand four hundred and fifty-three. The moſt patient Reader, who computes that three ponderous [3] volumes have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may, perhaps, be alarmed at the long proſpect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the ſame minuteneſs on the whole ſeries of the Byzantine hiſtory. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Juſtinian, and the conqueſts of the Mahometans, will deſerve and detain our attention, and the laſt age of Conſtantinople (the Cruſades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of Modern Europe. From the ſeventh to the eleventh century, the obſcure interval will be ſupplied by a conciſe narrative of ſuch facts, as may ſtill appear either intereſting or important.

BENTINCK-STREET,
March 1, 1782.

[3] The firſt ſix volumes of the octavo edition.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FIRST OCTAVO EDITION.

THE Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is now delivered to the Public in a more convenient form. Some alterations and improvements had preſented themſelves to my mind, but I was unwilling to injure or offend the purchaſers of the preceding editions. The accuracy of the Corrector of the Preſs has been already tried and approved; and, perhaps, I may ſtand excuſed, if, amidſt the avocations of a buſy winter, I have preferred the pleaſures of compoſition and ſtudy, to the minute diligence of reviſing a former publication.

BENTINCK-STREET,
April 20, 1783.

DILIGENCE and accuracy are the only merits which an hiſtorical writer may aſcribe to himſelf; if any merit indeed can be aſſumed from the performance of an indiſpenſable duty. I may therefore be allowed to ſay that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illuſtrate the ſubject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete the extenſive deſign which has been ſketched out in the Preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors conſulted during the progreſs of the whole work; and however ſuch an attempt might incur the cenſure of oſtentation, I am perſuaded, that it would be ſuſceptible of entertainment, as well as information.

At preſent I ſhall content myſelf with a ſingle obſervation. The Biographers, who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Conſtantine, compoſed, or rather compiled, the lives of the Emperors, from Hadrian to the ſons of Carus, are uſually mentioned under the names of Ælius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, Ælius Lampridius, Vulcatius Gallicanus, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiſcus. But there is ſo much perplexity in the titles of the MSS.; and ſo many diſputes have ariſen among the critics (ſee Fabricius, Biblioth. La-

tin. l. iii. c. 6.) concerning their number, their names, and their reſpective property; that for the moſt part I have quoted them without diſtinction, under the general and well-known title of the *Auguſtan Hiſtory*.

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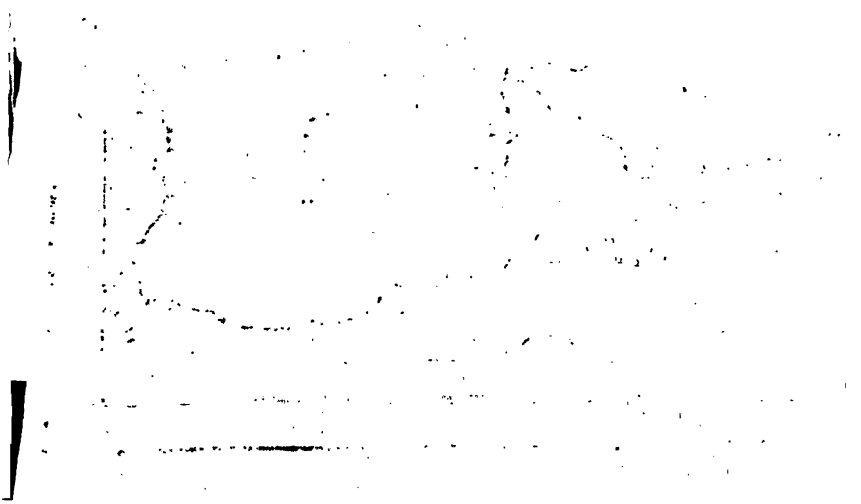
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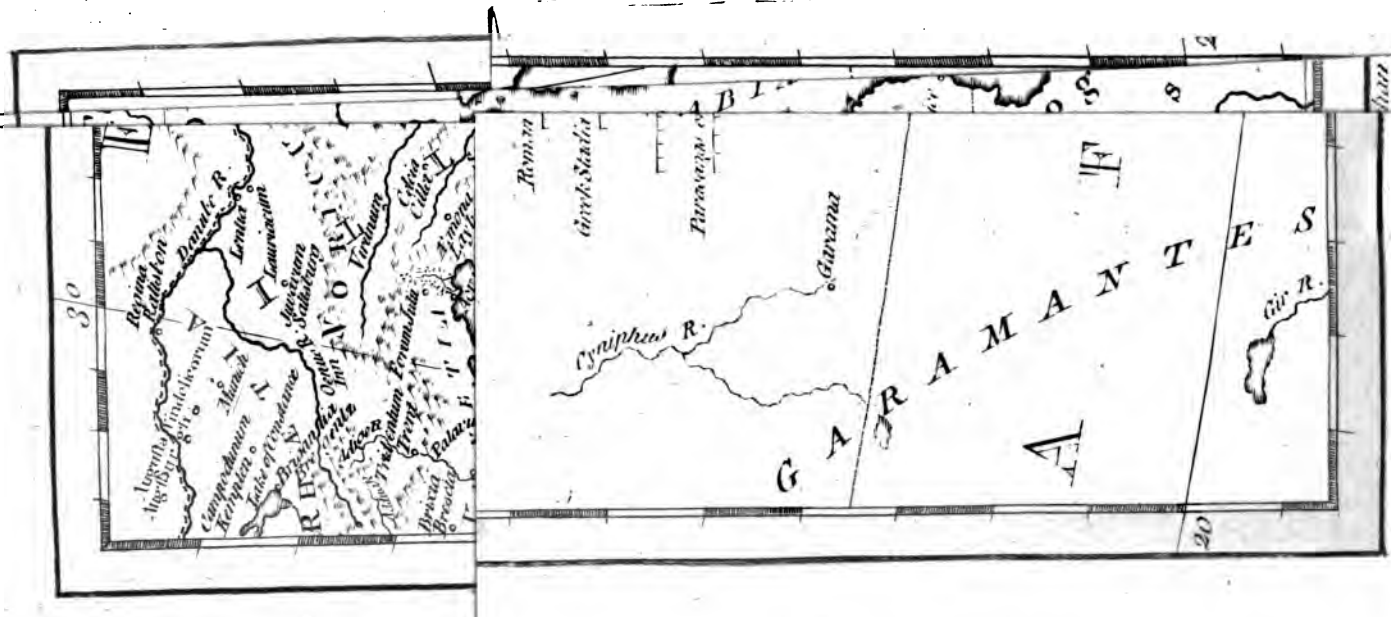
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THE




Rynia
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GARAMANTES
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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE.

CHAP. I.

The Extent and Military Force of the Empire in the Age of the Antonines.

CHAP. 1. Introduction.

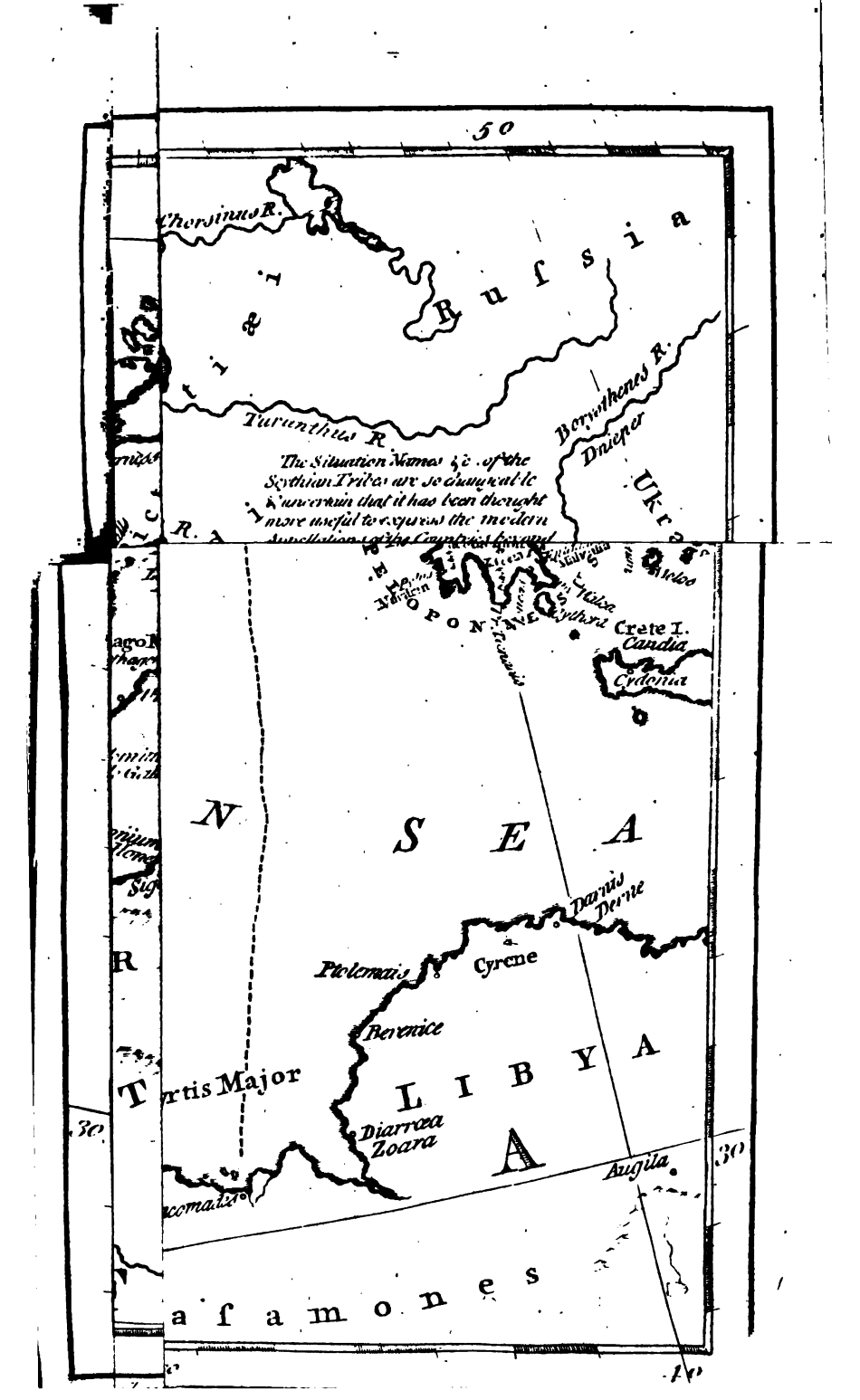
IN the ſecond century of the Chriſtian Æra, the Empire of Rome comprehended the faireſt part of the earth, and the moſt civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extenſive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and diſciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abuſed the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free conſtitution was preſerved with decent reverence: the Roman ſenate appeared to poſſeſs the ſovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than A. D. 98—180.

CHAP. I.

fourſcore years, the public adminiſtration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the deſign of this, and of the two ſucceeding chapters, to deſcribe the proſperous condition of their empire; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the moſt important circumſtances of its decline and fall; a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is ſtill felt by the nations of the earth.

Moderation of Auguſtus.

The principal conqueſts of the Romans were atchieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the moſt part, were ſatisfied with preſerving thoſe dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the ſenate, the active emulation of the conſuls, and the martial enthuſiaſm of the people. The ſeven firſt centuries were filled with a rapid ſucceſſion of triumphs; but it was reſerved for Auguſtus, to relinquiſh the ambitious deſign of ſubduing the whole earth, and to introduce a ſpirit of moderation into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and ſituation, it was eaſy for him to diſcover, that Rome, in her preſent exalted ſituation, had much leſs to hope than to fear from the chance of arms; and that, in the proſecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the poſſeſſion more precarious, and leſs beneficial. The experience of Auguſtus added weight to theſe ſalutary reflections, and effectually convinced him, that, by the prudent vigour of his counſels, it would


50
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Dnieper
Turcnthes R
The Situation Names &c. of the
Scythian Tribes are so changed &c
R
Crete I.
Candia
Cydonia
N
S E A
Paraetonium
Cyrene
Berenice
Syrtis Major
L I B Y A
Diarrœa
Zoara
Augila
30
a s a m o n e s

would be eaſy to ſecure every conceſſion, which the ſafety or the dignity of Rome might require from the moſt formidable Barbarians. Inſtead of expoſing his perſon and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honourable treaty, the reſtitution of the ſtandards and priſoners which had been taken in the defeat of Craſſus [1]. CHAP. I.

His generals, in the early part of his reign, attempted the reduction of Æthiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thouſand miles to the ſouth of the tropic; but the heat of the climate ſoon repelled the invaders, and protected the unwarlike natives of thoſe ſequeſtered regions [2]. The northern countries of Europe ſcarcely deſerved the expence and labour of conqueſt. The foreſts and moraſſes of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who deſpiſed life when it was ſeparated from freedom; and though, in the firſt attack, they ſeemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they ſoon, by a ſignal act of deſpair, regained their independence, and reminded Auguſtus of the viciſſitude of for-

[1] Dion Caſſius (l. liv. p. 736.), with the annotations of Reymar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the ſubject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Auguſtus recorded his own exploits, aſſerts that *he compelled* the Parthians to reſtore the enſigns of Craſſus.

[2] Strabo (l. xvi. p. 780.), Pliny the elder (Hiſt. Natur. l. vi. c. 32. 35.), and Dion Caſſius (l. liii. p. 723. and l. liv. p. 734.), have left us very curious details concerning theſe wars. The Romans made themſelves maſters of Mariaba, or Merab, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals (ſee Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52.). They were arrived within three days' journey of the Spice country, the rich object of their invaſion.

CHAP. I.

tune[3]. On the death of that emperor, his teſtament was publicly read in the ſenate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his ſucceſſors, the advice of confining the empire within thoſe limits, which Nature ſeemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries; on the weſt the Atlantic ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the eaſt; and towards the ſouth, the ſandy deſarts of Arabia and Africa[4].

Imitated by his ſucceſſors.

Happily for the repoſe of mankind, the moderate ſyſtem recommended by the wiſdom of Auguſtus, was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate ſucceſſors. Engaged in the purſuit of pleaſure, or in the exerciſe of tyranny, the firſt Cæſars ſeldom ſhewed themſelves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they diſpoſed to ſuffer, that thoſe triumphs which *their* indolence neglected, ſhould be uſurped by the conduct and valour of their lieutenants. The military fame of a ſubject was conſidered as an inſolent invaſion of the Imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as intereſt, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers intruſted to his care, without aſpiring to conqueſts which

[3] By the ſlaughter of Varus and his three legions. See the firſt book of the Annals of Tacitus. Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 23. and Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 117, &c. Auguſtus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmneſs that might have been expected from his character.

[4] Tacit. Annal. l. ii. Dion. Caſſius, l. lvi. p. 833. and the ſpeech of Auguſtus himſelf, in Julian's Cæſars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French tranſlator, M. Spanheim.

might

might have proved no leſs fatal to himſelf than to the vanquiſhed barbarians[5].

CHAP. I.

The only acceſſion which the Roman empire received, during the firſt century of the Chriſtian Æra, was the province of Britain. In this ſingle inſtance the ſucceſſors of Cæſar and Auguſtus were perſuaded to follow the example of the former, rather than the precept of the latter. The proximity of its ſituation to the coaſt of Gaul ſeemed to invite their arms; the pleaſing, though doubtful intelligence, of a pearl fiſhery, attracted their avarice[6]; and as Britain was viewed in the light of a diſtinct and inſulated world, the conqueſt ſcarcely formed any exception to the general ſyſtem of continental meaſures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the moſt ſtupid[7], maintained by the moſt diſſolute, and terminated by the moſt timid of all the emperors, the far greater part of the iſland ſubmitted to

Conqueſt of Britain was the firſt exception to it.

5 Germanicus, Suetonius Paullinus, and Agricola, were checked and recalled in the courſe of their victories. Corbulo was put to death. Military merit, as it is admirably expreſſed by Tacitus, was, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, *imperatoria virtus*.

6 Cæſar himſelf conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The Britiſh pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid colour. Tacitus obſerves, with reaſon (in Agricola, c. 12.), that it was an inherent defect. "Ego facilius crediderim, naturam margaritis deeſſe quam nobis "avaritiam."

7 Claudius, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expreſſed by Pomponius Mela, l. iii. c. 6. (he wrote under Claudius) that, by the ſucceſs of the Roman arms, the iſland and its ſavage inhabitants would ſoon be better known. It is amuſing enough to peruſe ſuch paſſages in the midſt of London.

CHAP. II. the Roman yoke[8]. The various tribes of Britons poſſeſſed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the ſpirit of union. They took up arms with ſavage fierceneſs; they laid them down, or turned them againſt each other, with wild inconſtancy; and while they fought ſingly, they were ſucceſſively ſubdued. Neither the fortitude of Caractacus, nor the deſpair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticiſm of the Druids, could avert the ſlavery of their country, or reſiſt the ſteady progreſs of the Imperial generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was diſgraced by the weakeſt, or the moſt vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inſpired; his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills; and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, diſplayed the Roman arms round every part of the iſland. The conqueſt of Britain was conſidered as already atchieved; and it was the deſign of Agricola to complete and enſure his ſucceſs by the eaſy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were ſufficient[9]. The weſtern iſle might be improved into a valuable poſſeſſion, and the Britons would

[8] See the admirable abridgment given by Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, and copiouſly, though perhaps not completely, illuſtrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horſley.

[9] The Iriſh writers, jealous of their national honour, are extremely provoked on this occaſion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola.

wear

wear their chains with the leſs reluctance, if the prospect and example of freedom were on every ſide removed from before their eyes. CHAP. I.

But the ſuperior merit of Agricola ſoon occaſioned his removal from the government of Britain; and for ever diſappointed this rational, though extenſive ſcheme of conqueſt. Before his departure, the prudent general had provided for ſecurity, as well as for dominion. He had obſerved, that the iſland is almoſt divided into two unequal parts by the oppoſite gulfs, or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Acroſs the narrow interval of about forty miles, he had drawn a line of military ſtations, which was afterwards fortified in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart erected on foundations of ſtone [10]. This wall of Antoninus, at a ſmall diſtance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glaſgow, was fixed as the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preſerved in the northern extremity of the iſland their wild independence, for which they were not leſs indebted to their poverty than to their valour. Their incurſions were frequently repelled and chaſtiſed; but their country was never ſubdued [11]. The maſters of the faireſt and moſt wealthy climates of the globe, turned with contempt from

[10] See Horſley's Britannia Romana, l. i. c. 12.

[11] The poet Buchanan celebrates, with elegance and ſpirit (ſee his Sylvæ, v.), the unviolated independence of his native country. But, if the ſingle teſtimony of Richard of Cirenceſter was ſufficient to create a Roman province of Veſpaſiana to the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits.

CHAP. I.

gloomy hills aſſailed by the winter tempeſt, from lakes concealed in a blue miſt, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the foreſt were chaſed by a troop of naked barbarians [12].

Conqueſt of Dacia; the ſecond exception.

Such was the ſtate of the Roman frontiers, and ſuch the maxims of Imperial policy from the death of Auguſtus to the acceſſion of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a ſoldier, and poſſeſſed the talents of a general [13]. The peaceful ſyſtem of his predeceſſors was interrupted by ſcenes of war and conqueſt; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The firſt exploits of Trajan were againſt the Dacians, the moſt warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had inſulted with impunity the majeſty of Rome [14]. To the ſtrength and fierceneſs of barbarians, they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm perſuaſion of the immortality and tranſmigration of the ſoul [15]. Decebalus, the Dacian king, approved himſelf a rival not unworthy of Trajan; nor did he deſpair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confeſſion of his enemies, he had exhauſted every reſource both of valour and policy [16]. This

[12] See Appian (in Procem.) and the uniform imagery of Oſſian's Poems, which, according to every hypotheſis, were compoſed by a native Caledonian.

[13] See Pliny's Panegyric, which ſeems founded on facts.

[14] Dion Caſſius, l. lxvii.

[15] Herodotus, l. iv. c. 94. Julian in the Cæſars, with Spanheim's obſervations.

[16] Plin. Epiſt. viii. 9.

memo-

memorable war, with a very ſhort ſuſpenſion of hoſtilities, laſted five years; and as the emperor could exert, without controul, the whole force of the ſtate, it was terminated by an abſolute ſubmiſſion of the barbarians [17]. The new province of Dacia, which formed a ſecond exception to the precept of Auguſtus, was about thirteen hundred miles in circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Nieſter, the Teyſs, or Tibiſcus, the Lower Danube, and the Euxine Sea. The veſtiges of a military road may ſtill be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighbourhood of Bender, a place famous in modern hiſtory, and the actual frontier of the Turkiſh and Ruſſian empires [18]. CHAP. I.

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind ſhall continue to beſtow more liberal applauſe on their deſtroyers than on their benefactors, the thirſt of military glory will ever be the vice of the moſt exalted characters. The praiſes of Alexander, tranſmitted by a ſucceſſion of poets and hiſtorians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him the Roman emperor undertook an expedition againſt the nations of the eaſt, but he lamented with a ſigh, that his advanced age ſcarcely left him any hopes of equalling the renown of the ſon of Philip [19]. Yet the ſucceſs of Trajan, however tran- Conqueſts of Trajan in the eaſt.

[17] Dion Caſſius, l. lxviii. p. 1123. 1131. Julian in Cæſaribus. Eutropius, viii. 2. 6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome.

[18] See a Memoir of M. d'Anville, on the Province of Dacia, in the Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxviii. p. 444—468.

[19] Trajan's ſentiments are repreſented in a very juſt and lively manner in the Cæſars of Julian.

ſient,

CHAP. I. fient, was rapid and ſpecious. The degenerate Parthians, broken by inteſtine diſcord, fled before his arms. He deſcended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Perſian gulph. He enjoyed the honour of being the firſt, as he was the laſt, of the Roman generals, who ever navigated that remote ſea. His fleets ravaged the coaſts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himſelf that he was approaching towards the confines of India [20]. Every day the aſtoniſhed ſenate received the intelligence of new names and new nations, that acknowledged his ſway. They were informed that the kings of Boſphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Oſrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himſelf, had accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carduchian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of Armenia, Meſopotamia, and Aſſyria, were reduced into the ſtate of provinces [21]. But the death of Trajan ſoon clouded the ſplendid proſpect; and it was juſtly to be dreaded, that ſo many diſtant nations would throw off the unaccuſtomed yoke, when they were no longer reſtrained by the powerful hand which had impoſed it.

Reſigned by his ſucceſſor Hadrian.

It was an ancient tradition, that when the Capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who preſided over bound-

[20] Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavoured to perpetuate the illuſion. See a very ſenſible diſſertation of M. Freret in the Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxi. p. 55.

[21] Dion Caſſius, l. lxviii.; and the Abbreviators.

aries,

aries, and was repreſented according to the faſhion of that age by a large ſtone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refuſed to yield his place to Jupiter himſelf. A favourable inference was drawn from his obſtinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs as a ſure preſage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede[22]. During many ages, the prediction, as it is uſual, contributed to its own accompliſhment. But though Terminus had reſiſted the majeſty of Jupiter, he ſubmitted to the authority of the emperor Hadrian[23]. The reſignation of all the eaſtern conqueſts of Trajan was the firſt meaſure of his reign. He reſtored to the Parthians the election of an independent ſovereign, withdrew the Roman garriſons from the provinces of Armenia, Meſopotamia, and Aſſyria, and, in compliance with the precept of Auguſtus, once more eſtabliſhed the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire[24]. Cenſure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has aſcribed to envy, a conduct, which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meaneſt and the moſt generous ſentiments, may afford ſome colour to

CHAP. I.

22 Ovid. Faſt. l. ii. ver. 667. See Livy, and Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, under the reign of Tarquin.

23 St. Auguſtin is highly delighted with the proof of the weakneſs of Terminus, and the vanity of the Augurs. See De Civitate Dei, iv. 29.

24 See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 5. Jerome's Chronicle, and all the Epitomiſers. It is ſomewhat ſurpriſing, that this memorable event ſhould be omitted by Dion, or rather by Xiphilin.

the

CHAP. I.

the ſuſpicion. It was, however, ſcarcely in his power to place the ſuperiority of his predeceſſor in a more conſpicuous light, than by thus confeſſing himſelf unequal to the taſk of defending the conqueſts of Trajan.

Contraſt of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

The martial and ambitious ſpirit of Trajan formed a very ſingular contraſt with the moderation of his ſucceſſor. The reſtleſs activity of Hadrian was not leſs remarkable, when compared with the gentle repoſe of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almoſt a perpetual journey; and as he poſſeſſed the various talents of the ſoldier, the ſtateſman, and the ſcholar, he gratified his curioſity in the diſcharge of his duty. Careleſs of the difference of ſeaſons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bare-headed, over the ſnows of Caledonia, and the ſultry plains of the Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire, which, in the courſe of his reign, was not honoured with the preſence of the monarch [25]. But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was ſpent in the boſom of Italy; and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public adminiſtration, the longeſt journies of that amiable prince extended no further than from his palace in Rome, to the retirement of his Lanuvian Villa [26].

Pacific ſyſtem of Hadrian and the two Antonines.

Notwithſtanding this difference in their perſonal conduct, the general ſyſtem of Auguſtus

25 Dion, l. lxix. p. 1158. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 5. 8. If all our hiſtorians were loſt, medals, inſcriptions, and other monuments, would be ſufficient to record the travels of Hadrian.

26 See the Auguſtan Hiſtory and the Epitomes.

was

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was equally adopted and uniformly purſued by Hadrian and by the two Antonines. They perſiſted in the deſign of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honourable expedient they invited the friendſhip of the barbarians; and endeavoured to convince mankind, that the Roman power, raiſed above the temptation of conqueſt, was actuated only by the love of order and juſtice. During a long period of forty-three years their virtuous labours were crowned with ſucceſs; and if we except a few ſlight hoſtilities that ſerved to exerciſe the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair proſpect of univerſal peace[27]. The Roman name was revered among the moſt remote nations of the earth. The fierceſt barbarians frequently ſubmitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor; and we are informed by a cotemporary hiſtorian, that he had ſeen ambaſſadors who were refuſed the honour which they came to ſolicit, of being admitted into the rank of ſubjects[28].

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors.

Defenſive wars of Marcus Antoninus.

[27] We muſt, however, remember, that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a ſingle province: Pauſanias (l. viii. c. 43.) mentions two neceſſary and ſucceſsful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius. 1ſt, Againſt the wandering Moors, who were driven into the ſolitudes of Atlas. 2d, Againſt the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province. Both theſe wars (with ſeveral other hoſtilities) are mentioned in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 19.

[28] Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his Hiſtory of the Roman wars.

They

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They preſerved peace by a conſtant preparation for war; and while juſtice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines, that they were as little diſpoſed to endure, as to offer an injury. The military ſtrength, which it had been ſufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antonimus to diſplay, was exerted againſt the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hoſtilities of the barbarians provoked the reſentment of that philoſophic monarch, and, in the proſecution of a juſt defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many ſignal victories, both on the Euphrates, and on the Danube [29]. The military eſtabliſhment of the Roman empire, which thus aſſured either its tranquillity or ſucceſs, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

Military eſtabliſhment of the Roman emperors.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the uſe of arms was reſerved for thoſe ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and ſome ſhare in enacting thoſe laws, which it was their intereſt, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was loſt in extent of conqueſt, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade [30]. The legions themſelves, even at the time

29 Dion, l. lxxi. Hiſt. Auguſt. in Marco. The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible hiſtorians, whoſe memory has been reſcued from oblivion, and expoſed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticiſm of Lucian.

30 The pooreſt rank of ſoldiers poſſeſſed above forty pounds ſterling (Dionyſ. Halicarn. iv. 17.), a very high qualification, at a time when money was ſo ſcarce, that an ounce of ſilver was equi-

 valent

time when they were recruited in the moſt diſtant provinces, were ſuppoſed to conſiſt of Roman citizens. That diſtinction was generally conſidered, either as a legal qualification, or as a proper recompence for the ſoldier; but a more ſerious regard was paid to the eſſential merit of age, ſtrength, and military ſtature[31]. In all levies, a juſt preference was given to the climates of the North over thoſe of the South: the race of men born to the exerciſe of arms was ſought for in the country rather than in cities; and it was very reaſonably preſumed, that the hardy occupations of ſmiths, carpenters, and huntſmen, would ſupply more vigour and reſolution, than the ſedentary trades which are employed in the ſervice of luxury[32]. After every qualification of property had been laid aſide, the armies of the Roman emperors were ſtill commanded, for the moſt part, by officers of a liberal birth and education; but the common ſoldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meaneſt, and very frequently from the moſt profligate, of mankind. CHAP. I.

That public virtue which among the ancients was denominated patriotiſm, is derived from a ſtrong ſenſe of our own intereſt in the preſervation and proſperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a ſentiment, Diſcipline.

valent to ſeventy pound weight of braſs. The populace, excluded by the ancient conſtitution, were indiſcriminately admitted by Marius. See Salluſt. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 91.

[31] Cæſar formed his legion Alauda of Gauls and ſtrangers: but it was during the licence of civil war; and after the victory, he gave them the freedom of the city for their reward.

[32] See Vegetius de Re Militari, l. i. c. 2—7.

which

CHAP. I. which had rendered the legions of the republic almoſt invincible, could make but a very feeble impreſſion on the mercenary ſervants of a deſpotic prince; and it became neceſſary to ſupply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not leſs forcible nature; honour and religion. The peaſant, or mechanic, imbibed the uſeful prejudice that he was advanced to the more dignified profeſſion of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valour; and that, although the proweſs of a private ſoldier muſt often eſcape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might ſometimes confer glory or diſgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whoſe honours he was aſſociated. On his firſt entrance into the ſervice, an oath was adminiſtered to him, with every circumſtance of ſolemnity. He promiſed never to deſert his ſtandard, to ſubmit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to ſacrifice his life for the ſafety of the emperor and the empire[33]. The attachment of the Roman troops to their ſtandards, was inſpired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondeſt devotion; nor was it eſteemed leſs impious than it was ignominious, to abandon that ſacred enſign in the hour of danger[34]. Theſe motives, which derived their

[33] The oath of ſervice and fidelity to the emperor was annually renewed by the troops on the firſt of January.

[34] Tacitus calls the Roman eagles, Bellorum Deos. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worſhip of the troops.

ſtrength

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ſtrength from the imagination, were enforced by fears and hopes of a more ſubſtantial kind. Regular pay, occaſional donatives, and a ſtated recompenſe after the appointed time of ſervice, alleviated the hardſhips of the military life [35], whilſt, on the other hand, it was impoſſible for cowardice or diſobedience to eſcape the ſevereſt puniſhment. The centurions were authorized to chaſtiſe with blows, the generals had a right to puniſh with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman diſcipline, that a good ſoldier ſhould dread his officers far more than the enemy. From ſuch laudable arts did the valour of the Imperial troops receive a degree of firmneſs and docility, unattainable by the impetuous and irregular paſſions of barbarians.

Exerciſes.

And yet ſo ſenſible were the Romans of the imperfection of valour without ſkill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which ſignified exerciſe [36]. Military exerciſes were the important

35 See Gronovius de Pecunia vetere, l. iii. p. 120, &c. The emperor Domitian raiſed the annual ſtipend of the legionaries to twelve pieces of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, ſomewhat higher than our own, had been, and was afterwards, gradually increaſed, according to the progreſs of wealth and military government. After twenty years ſervice, the veteran received three thouſand denarii (about one hundred pounds ſterling), or a proportionable allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general, about double thoſe of the legions.

36 *Exercitus ab exercitando*, Varro de Linguâ Latinâ, l. iv. Cicero in Tuſculan, l. ii. 37. There is room for a very intereſting work, which ſhould lay open the connexion between the languages and manners of nations.

CHAP. I. and unremitted object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large sheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their useful labours might not receive any interruption from the most tempestuous weather; and it was carefully observed, that the arms destined to this imitation of war, should be of double the weight which was required in real action[37]. It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark, that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every species of arms that was used either for offence or for defence, either in distant engagement, or in a closer onset; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes, in the Pyrrhic or martial dance[38]. In the midst of peace, the Roman troops familiarised themselves with the practice of war; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the

37 Vegetius, l. ii. and the rest of his first book.

38 The Pyrrhic dance is extremely well illustrated by M. le Beau, in the Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxxv. p. 262, &c. That learned academician, in a series of memoirs, has collected all the passages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion.

only circumſtance which diſtinguiſhed a field of battle from a field of exerciſe [39]. It was the policy of the ableſt generals, and even of the emperors themſelves, to encourage theſe military ſtudies by their preſence and example; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condeſcended to inſtruct the unexperienced ſoldiers, to reward the diligent, and ſometimes to diſpute with them the prize of ſuperior ſtrength or dexterity [40]. Under the reigns of thoſe princes, the ſcience of tactics was cultivated with ſucceſs; and as long as the empire retained any vigour, their military inſtructions were reſpected as the moſt perfect model of Roman diſcipline. CHAP. I.

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the ſervice many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are deſcribed by Polybius [41], in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from thoſe which atchieved the victories of Cæſar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The conſtitution of the Imperial legion may be deſcribed in a few words [42]. The heavy-armed in- The legions under the emperors.

39 Joſeph. de Bell. Judaico, l. iii. c. 5. We are indebted to this Jew for ſome very curious details of Roman diſcipline.

40 Plin. Panegyr. c. 13. Life of Hadrian, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

41 See an admirable digreſſion on the Roman diſcipline, in the ſixth book of his hiſtory.

42 Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 4, &c. Conſiderable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he deſcribes it, cannot ſuit any other age of the Roman empire.

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fantry, which compoſed its principal ſtrength[43], was divided into ten cohorts, and fifty-five companies, under the orders of a correſpondent number of tribunes and centurions. The firſt cohort, which always claimed the poſt of honour and the cuſtody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five ſoldiers, the moſt approved for valour and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts conſiſted each of five hundred and fifty-five; and the whole body of legionary infantry amounted to ſix thouſand one hundred men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their ſervice: an open helmet, with a lofty creſt; a breaſt-plate, or coat of mail; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and a half in breadth, framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and ſtrongly guarded with plates of braſs. Beſides a lighter ſpear, the legionary ſoldier graſped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whoſe utmoſt length was about ſix feet, and which was terminated by a maſſy triangular point of ſteel of eighteen inches[44]. This inſtrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-

Arms.

43 Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 1. In the purer age of Cæſar and Cicero, the word *miles* was almoſt confined to the infantry. Under the lower empire, and in the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almoſt as excluſively to the men at arms, who fought on horſeback.

44 In the time of Polybius and Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus (l. v. c. 45.), the ſteel point of the pilum ſeems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius, it was reduced to a foot, or even nine inches. I have choſen a medium.

arms; ſince it was exhauſted by a ſingle diſcharge, at the diſtance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet when it was launched by a firm and ſkilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durſt venture within its reach, nor any ſhield or corſlet that could ſuſtain the impetuoſity of its weight. As ſoon as the Roman had darted his *pilum*, he drew his ſword, and ruſhed forwards to cloſe with the enemy. His ſword was a ſhort well-tempered Spaniſh blade, that carried a double edge, and was alike ſuited to the purpoſe of ſtriking or of puſhing; but the ſoldier was always inſtructed to prefer the latter uſe of his weapon, as his own body remained leſs expoſed, whilſt he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adverſary [45]. The legion was uſually drawn up eight deep; and the regular diſtance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks [46]. A body of troops habituated to preſerve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themſelves prepared to execute every diſpoſition which the circumſtances of war, or the ſkill of their leader, might ſuggeſt. The ſoldier poſſeſſed a free ſpace for his arms and motions, and ſufficient intervals were allowed, through which ſeaſonable reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhauſted combatants [47]. The tactics of the Greeks and Ma-

CHAP. L.

45 For the legionary arms, ſee Lipſius de Militiâ Romanâ, l. iii. c. 2—7.

46 See the beautiful compariſon of Virgil, Georgic. ii. v. 279.

47 M. Guichard, Memoires Militaires, tom. i. c. 4. and Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. p. 293—311. has treated the ſubject like a ſcholar and an officer.

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cedonians were formed on very different principles. The ſtrength of the phalanx depended on ſixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the cloſeſt array [48]. But it was ſoon diſcovered by reflection, as well as by the event, that the ſtrength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion [49].

Cavalry.

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten troops or ſquadrons; the firſt, as the companion of the firſt cohort, conſiſted of an hundred and thirty-two men; whilſt each of the other nine amounted only to ſixty-ſix. The entire eſtabliſhment formed a regiment, if we may uſe the modern expreſſion, of ſeven hundred and twenty-ſix horſe, naturally connected with its reſpective legion, but occaſionally ſeparated to act in the line, and to compoſe a part of the wings of the army [50]. The cavalry of the emperors was no longer compoſed, like that of the ancient republic, of the nobleſt youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military ſervice on horſeback, prepared themſelves for the offices of ſenator and conſul; and ſolicited, by deeds of valour, the future ſuffrages of their countrymen [51]. Since the alteration of manners

[48] See Arrian's Tactics. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather choſe to deſcribe the phalanx, of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded.

[49] Polyb. l. xvii.

[50] Veget. de Re Militari, l. ii. c. 6. His poſitive teſtimony, which might be ſupported by circumſtantial evidence, ought ſurely to ſilence thoſe critics who refuſe the Imperial legion its proper body of cavalry.

[51] See Livy almoſt throughout, particularly xlii. 61.

and

and government, the moſt wealthy of the equeſtrian order were engaged in the adminiſtration of juſtice, and of the revenue[52]; and whenever they embraced the profeſſion of arms, they were immediately intruſted with a troop of horſe, or a cohort of foot[53]. Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the ſame provinces, and the ſame claſs of their ſubjects, which recruited the ranks of the legion. The horſes were bred, for the moſt part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers deſpiſed the complete armour with which the cavalry of the Eaſt was encumbered. *Their* more uſeful arms conſiſted in a helmet, an oblong ſhield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad-ſword, were their principal weapons of offence. The uſe of lances and of iron maces they ſeem to have borrowed from the barbarians[54]. CHAP. I.

Auxiliaries.

The ſafety and honour of the empire were principally intruſted to the legions, but the policy of Rome condeſcended to adopt every uſeful inſtrument of war. Conſiderable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deſerved the honourable diſtinction of Romans. Many dependant princes and communities diſperſed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and ſecurity by the

[52] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xxxiii. 2. The true ſenſe of that very curious paſſage was firſt diſcovered and illuſtrated by M. de Beaufort, Republique Romaine, l. ii. c. 2.

[53] As in the inſtance of Horace and Agricola. This appears to have been a defect in the Roman diſcipline; which Hadrian endeavoured to remedy, by aſcertaining the legal age of a tribune.

[54] See Arrian's Tactics.

CHAP. I.

tenure of military ſervice[55]. Even ſelect troops of hoſtile barbarians were frequently compelled or perſuaded to conſume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the ſtate[56]. All theſe were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howſoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumſtances, their numbers were ſeldom much inferior to thoſe of the legions themſelves[57]. Among the auxiliaries, the braveſt and moſt faithful bands were placed under the command of præfects and centurions, and ſeverely trained in the arts of Roman diſcipline; but the far greater part retained thoſe arms, to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, more peculiarly adapted them. By this inſtitution, each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itſelf every ſpecies of lighter troops, and of miſſile weapons; and was capable of encountering every nation, with the advantages of its reſpective arms and diſcipline[58]. Nor was the legion deſtitute of what, in modern language, would be ſtyled a train of artillery. It conſiſted in ten military engines of the largeſt, and fifty-five of

Artillery.

55 Such in particular was the ſtate of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 29.

56 Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquiſhed Quadi and Marcomanni to ſupply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately ſent into Britain. Dion Caſſius, l. lxxi.

57 Tacit. Annal. iv. 5. Thoſe who fix a regular proportion of as many foot, and twice as many horſe, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors, with the Italian allies of the republic.

58 Vegetius, ii. 2. Arrian, in his order of march and battle againſt the Alani.

a ſmaller

a ſmaller ſize; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, diſcharged ſtones and darts with irreſiſtible violence [59]. CHAP. I.

Encampment.

The camp of a Roman legion preſented the appearance of a fortified city [60]. As ſoon as the ſpace was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate, that a ſquare of about ſeven hundred yards was ſufficient for the encampment of twenty thouſand Romans; though a ſimilar number of our own troops would expoſe to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midſt of the camp, the prætorium, or general's quarters, roſe above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries, occupied their reſpective ſtations; the ſtreets were broad, and perfectly ſtraight, and a vacant ſpace of two hundred feet was left on all ſides, between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itſelf was uſually twelve feet high, armed with a line of ſtrong and

[59] The ſubject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the Chevalier Folard (Polybe, tom. ii. p. 233—290.). He prefers them in many reſpects to our modern cannon and mortars. We may obſerve, that the uſe of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as perſonal valour and military ſkill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was ſupplied by machines. See Vegetius, ii. 25. Arrian.

[60] Vegetius finiſhes his ſecond book, and the deſcription of the legion, with the following emphatic words: "Univerſa quæ in "quoque belli genere neceſſaria eſſe creduntur, ſecum legio debet "ubique portare, ut in quovis loco fixerit caſtra, armatam faciat "civitatem."

intricate

CHAP. L. intricate paliſades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legionaries themſelves; to whom the uſe of the ſpade and the pick-axe was no leſs familiar than that of the ſword or *pilum*. Active valour may often be the preſent of nature; but ſuch patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and diſcipline [61].

March. Whenever the trumpet gave the ſignal of departure, the camp was almoſt inſtantly broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confuſion. Beſides their arms, which the legionaries ſcarcely conſidered as an incumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the inſtruments of fortification, and the proviſion of many days [62]. Under this weight, which would oppreſs the delicacy of a modern ſoldier, they were trained by a regular ſtep to advance, in about ſix hours, near twenty miles [63]. On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aſide their baggage, and by eaſy and rapid evolutions converted the column of march into an order of battle [64]. The ſlingers and archers ſkirmiſhed in the front; the auxiliaries formed the firſt line, and were ſeconded or ſuſtained by the ſtrength of the

61 For the Roman Caſtremetation, ſee Polybius, l. vi. with Lipſius de Militiâ Romana, Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 5. Vegetius, i. 21—25. iii. 9. and Memoires de Guichard. tom. i. c. 1.

62 Cicero in Tuſculan. ii. 37.—Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. l. iii. 5. Frontinus, iv. 1.

63 Vegetius, i. 9. See Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xxv. p. 187.

64 See thoſe evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard, Nouveaux Memoires, tom. i. p. 141—234.

legions;

legions: the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear. CHAP. I.

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extenſive conqueſts, and preſerved a military ſpirit, at a time when every other virtue was oppreſſed by luxury and deſpotiſm. If, in the conſideration of their armies, we paſs from their diſcipline to their numbers, we ſhall not find it eaſy to define them with any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however, that the legion, which was itſelf a body of ſix thouſand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans, might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to about twelve thouſand five hundred men. The peace eſtabliſhment of Hadrian and his ſucceſſors was compoſed of no leſs than thirty of theſe formidable brigades; and moſt probably formed a ſtanding force of three hundred and ſeventy-five thouſand men. Inſtead of being confined within the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans conſidered as the refuge of weakneſs or puſillanimity, the legions were encamped on the banks of the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the barbarians. As their ſtations, for the moſt part, remained fixed and permanent, we may venture to deſcribe the diſtribution of the troops. Three legions were ſufficient for Britain. The principal ſtrength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and conſiſted of ſixteen legions, in the following proportions: two in the Lower, and three in the Upper Germany; one in Rhætia, one in Noricum, four in Pannonia, three in Mæſia, and two in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was entruſted

Number and diſpoſition of the legions.

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entruſted to eight legions, ſix of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important ſcene of war, a ſingle legion maintained the domeſtic tranquillity of each of thoſe great provinces. Even Italy was not left deſtitute of a military force. Above twenty thouſand choſen ſoldiers, diſtinguiſhed by the titles of City Cohorts and Prætorian Guards, watched over the ſafety of the monarch and the capital. As the authors of almoſt every revolution that diſtracted the empire, the Prætorians will, very ſoon, and very loudly, demand our attention; but in their arms and inſtitutions we cannot find any circumſtance which diſcriminated them from the legions, unleſs it were a more ſplendid appearance, and a leſs rigid diſcipline [65].

Navy.

The navy maintained by the emperors might ſeem inadequate to their greatneſs; but it was fully ſufficient for every uſeful purpoſe of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterpriſing ſpirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marſeilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the moſt remote coaſts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained

[65] Tacitus (Annal. iv. 5.) has given us a ſtate of the legions under Tiberius: and Dion Caſſius (l. lv. p. 794.) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavoured to fix on the proper medium between theſe two periods. See likewiſe Lipſius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4, 5.

an

an object of terror rather than of curiosity [66]; the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage, and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views, Augustus stationed two permanent fleets in the most convenient ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna on the Adriatic, the other at Misenum in the bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients, that as soon as their gallies exceeded two, or at the most three ranks of oars, they were suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (they were called Liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival [67]. Of these Liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to command, the one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean; and to each of the squadrons he attached a body of several thousand mariners. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded

CHAP. I.

[66] The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretence of religious awe, their ignorance and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34.

[67] Plutarch. in Marc. Anton. And yet, if we may credit Orosius, these monstrous castles were no more than ten feet above the water, vi. 19.

by

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by forty ships; and three thousand soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians [68]. If we review this general state of the Imperial forces; of the cavalry as well as infantry; of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy; the most liberal computation will not allow us to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land at more than four hundred and fifty thousand men; a military power, which, however formidable it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire [69].

Amount of the whole establishment.

View of the provinces of the Roman empire.

We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavour, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but at present divided into so many independent and hostile states.

Spain.

Spain, the western extremity of the empire, of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenæan mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided be-

[68] See Lipsius, de Magnitud. Rom. l. i. c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.

[69] Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XIV. c. 29. It must, however, be remembered, that France still feels that extraordinary effort.

tween

tween two ſovereigns, was diſtributed by Auguſtus into three provinces, Luſitania, Bætica, and Tarraconenſis. The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Luſitanians; and the loſs ſuſtained by the former, on the ſide of the Eaſt, is compenſated by an acceſſion of territory towards the North. The confines of Grenada and Andaluſia correſpond with thoſe of ancient Bætica. The remainder of Spain, Gallicia and the Aſturias, Biſcay and Navarre, Leon and the two Caſtilles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon, all contributed to form the third and moſt conſiderable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was ſtyled the province of Tarragona[70]. Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the moſt powerful, as the Cantabrians and Aſturians proved the moſt obſtinate. Confident in the ſtrength of their mountains, they were the laſt who ſubmitted to the arms of Rome, and the firſt who threw off the yoke of the Arabs. CHAP. I.

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the Ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquiſitions of Alſace and Lorraine, we muſt add the duchy of Gaul.

70 See Strabo, l. ii. It is natural enough to ſuppoſe, that Arragon is derived from Tarraconenſis, and ſeveral moderns who have written in Latin, uſe thoſe words as ſynonymous. It is however certain, that the Arragon, a little ſtream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, firſt gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, Geographie du Moyen Age, p. 181.

Savoy,

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Savoy, the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxemburgh, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant. When Auguſtus gave laws to the conqueſts of his father, he introduced a diviſion of Gaul equally adapted to the progreſs of the legions, to the courſe of the rivers, and to the principal national diſtinctions, which had comprehended above an hundred independent ſtates[71]. The ſea-coaſt of the Mediterranean, Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was ſtyled the Celtic Gaul, and ſoon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Cæſar, the Germans, abuſing their ſuperiority of valour, had occupied a conſiderable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced ſo flattering a circumſtance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Baſil to Leyden, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany[72]. Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the ſix

[71] One hundred and fifteen *cities* appear in the Notitia of Gaul; and it is well known that this appellation was applied not only to the capital town, but to the whole territory of each ſtate. But Plutarch and Appian increaſe the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

[72] D'Anville. Notice de l'Ancienne Gaule.

provinces

provinces of Gaul; the Narbonneſe, Aquitain, the Celtic, or Lyonneſe, the Belgic, and the two Germanies. CHAP. I.

We have already had occaſion to mention the conqueſt of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this iſland. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the Lowlands of Scotland, as far as the Friths of Dunbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain loſt her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the moſt conſiderable were the Belgæ in the Weſt, the Brigantes in the North, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk [73]. As far as we can either trace or credit the reſemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the ſame hardy race of ſavages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often diſputed the field, and often renewed the conteſt. After their ſubmiſſion, they conſtituted the weſtern diviſion of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tagus to the ſources of the Rhine and Danube. Britain.

Before the Roman conqueſt, the country which is now called Lombardy, was not conſidered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, ſettling themſelves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffuſed their name from the Alps to the Apennine. The Italy.

[73] Whitaker's Hiſtory of Manchester, vol. i. c. 3.

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Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coaſt, which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn: but the territories of that ſtate which lie to the eaſt of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians [74]. The middle part of the peninſula that now compoſes the dutchy of Tuſcany and the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, was the ancient ſeat of the Etruſcans and Umbrians; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the firſt rudiments of civilized life [75]. The Tyber rolled at the foot of the ſeven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volſci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the firſt conſuls deſerved triumphs, their ſucceſſors adorned villas, and *their* poſterity have erected convents [76]. Capua and Campania poſſeſſed the immediate territory of Naples; and the reſt of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marſi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the ſea-coaſts had been covered by the flouriſhing colonies of the Greeks. We may remark, that when Auguſtus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Iſtria was annexed to that ſeat of Roman ſovereignty [77].

74 The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. See M. Freret, Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xviii.

75 See Maffei Verona illuſtrata, l. i.

76 The firſt contraſt was obſerved by the ancients. See Florus, i. 11. The ſecond muſt ſtrike every modern traveller.

77 Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. l. iii.) follows the diviſion of Italy by Auguſtus.

The

CHAP. I.

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the courſe of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of thoſe mighty ſtreams, which riſes at the diſtance of only thirty miles from the former, flows above thirteen hundred miles, for the moſt part to the ſouth-eaſt, collects the tribute of ſixty navigable rivers, and is at length, through ſix mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears ſcarcely equal to ſuch an acceſſion of waters[78]. The provinces of the Danube ſoon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier[79], and were eſteemed the moſt warlike of the empire; but they deſerve to be more particularly conſidered under the names of Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Meſia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The Danube and Illyrian frontier.

The province of Rhætia, which ſoon extinguiſhed the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the ſummit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its ſource, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greateſt part of the flat country is ſubject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augſburgh is protected by the conſtitution of the German empire; the Griſons are ſafe in their mountains, and the country of Tirol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the houſe of Auſtria.

Rhætia.

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save;

Noricum and Pannonia.

[78] Tournefort, Voyages en Grèce et Aſie Mineure, lettre xviii.

[79] The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the ſea-coaſt of the Hadriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine Sea. See Serverini Pannonia, l. i. c. 3.

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Auſtria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Sclavonia, was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original ſtate of independence, their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they ſtill remain the patrimony of a ſingle family. They now contain the reſidence of a German prince, who ſtiles himſelf Emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as ſtrength, of the Auſtrian power. It may not be improper to obſerve, that if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern ſkirts of Auſtria, and a part of Hungary between the Teyſs and the Danube, all the other dominions of the houſe of Auſtria were compriſed within the limits of the Roman empire.

Dalmatia.

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long, but narrow tract, between the Save and the Adriatic. The beſt part of the ſea-coaſt, which ſtill retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian ſtate, and the ſeat of the little republic of Raguſa. The inland parts have aſſumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Boſnia; the former obeys an Auſtrian governor, the latter a Turkiſh paſha; but the whole country is ſtill infeſted by tribes of barbarians, whoſe ſavage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the Chriſtian and Mahometan power [80].

After

[80] A Venetian traveller, the Abbate Fortis, has lately given us ſome account of thoſe very obſcure countries. But the geography and antiquities

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After the Danube had received the waters of the Teyſs and the Save, it acquired, at leaſt, among the Greeks, the name of Iſter[81]. It formerly divided Mæſia and Dacia, the latter of which, as we have already ſeen, was a conqueſt of Trajan, and the only province beyond the river. If we enquire into the preſent ſtate of thoſe countries, we ſhall find that, on the left hand of the Danube, Temeſwar and Tranſylvania have been annexed, after many revolutions, to the crown of Hungary; whilſt the principalities of Moldavia and Walachia acknowledge the ſupremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right hand of the Danube, Mæſia, which, during the middle ages, was broken into the barbarian kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in Turkiſh ſlavery.

Mæſia and Dacia.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is ſtill beſtowed by the Turks on the extenſive countries of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preſerves the memory of their ancient ſtate under the Roman empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of Hæmus and Rhodope, to the Boſphorus and the Helleſpont, had aſſumed the form of a province. Notwithſtanding the change of maſters and of religion, the new city of Rome, founded by Conſtantine on the banks of the Boſphorus, has ever ſince remained the capital of a great monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which,

Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

antiquities of the weſtern Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its ſovereign.

[81] The Save riſes near the confines of *Iſtria*, and was conſidered by the more early Greeks as the principal ſtream of the Danube.

CHAP. 1.

under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Aſia, derived more ſolid advantages from the policy of the two Philips; and with its dependencies of Epirus and Theſſaly, extended from the Ægean to the Ionian ſea. When we reflect on the fame of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we can ſcarcely perſuade ourſelves, that ſo many immortal republics of ancient Greece were loſt in a ſingle province of the Roman empire, which, from the ſuperior influence of the Achæan league, was uſually denominated the province of Achaia.

Aſia Minor.

Such was the ſtate of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Aſia, without excepting the tranſient conqueſts of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkiſh power. But, inſtead of following the arbitrary diviſions of deſpotiſm and ignorance, it will be ſafer for us, as well as more agreeable, to obſerve the indelible characters of nature. The name of Aſia Minor is attributed with ſome propriety to the peninſula, which, confined betwixt the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The moſt extenſive and flouriſhing diſtrict, weſtward of mount Taurus and the river Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the excluſive title of Aſia. The juriſdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus poſſeſſed the northern ſide of

of the peninſula from Conſtantinople to Trebizond. On the oppoſite ſide, the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria: the inland country, ſeparated from the Roman Aſia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may obſerve, that the northern ſhores of the Euxine, beyond Trebizond in Aſia, and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the ſovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands, either tributary princes or Roman garriſons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circaſſia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of thoſe ſavage countries [82]. CHAP. I.

Under the ſucceſſors of Alexander, Syria was the ſeat of the Seleucidæ, who reigned over Upper Aſia, till the ſucceſsful revolt of the Parthians confined their dominions between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria became ſubject to the Romans, it formed the eaſtern frontier of their empire; nor did that province, in its utmoſt latitude, know any other bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the north, and towards the ſouth, the confines of Egypt, and the Red Sea. Phœnicia and Paleſtine were ſometimes annexed to, and ſometimes ſeparated from, the juriſdiction of Syria. The former of theſe was a narrow and rocky coaſt; the latter was a territory ſcarcely ſuperior to Syria, Phœnicia, and Paleſtine.

[82] See the Periplus of Arrian. He examined the coaſts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.

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Wales, either in fertility or extent. Yet Phœnicia and Paleſtine will for ever live in the memory of mankind; ſince America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other[83]. A ſandy deſert alike deſtitute of wood and water ſkirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inſeparably connected with their independence; and wherever, on ſome ſpots leſs barren than the reſt, they ventured to form any ſettled habitation, they ſoon became ſubjects to the Roman empire[84].

Egypt.

The geographers of antiquity have frequently heſitated to what portion of the globe they ſhould aſcribe Egypt[85]. By its ſituation that celebrated kingdom is included within the immenſe peninſula of Africa; but it is acceſſible only on the ſide of Aſia, whoſe revolutions, in almoſt every period of hiſtory, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman præfect was ſeated on the ſplendid throne of the Ptolemies; and the iron ſceptre of the

[83] The progreſs of religion is well known. The uſe of letters was introduced among the ſavages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Chriſt; and the Europeans carried them to America about fifteen centuries after the Chriſtian æra. But in a period of three thouſand years, the Phœnician alphabet received conſiderable alterations, as it paſſed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.

[84] Dion Caſſius, lib. lxviii. p. 1131.

[85] Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the Iſthmus of Suez as the boundary of Aſia and Africa. Dionyſius, Mela, Pliny, Salluſt, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for that purpoſe the weſtern branch of the Nile, or even the great Catabathmus, or deſcent, which laſt would aſſign to Aſia, not only Egypt, but part of Libya.

Mama-

Mamalukes is now in the hands of a Turkiſh paſha. The Nile flows down the country, above five hundred miles from the tropic of Cancer to the Mediterranean, and marks, on either ſide, the extent of fertility by the meaſure of its inundations. Cyrene, ſituate towards the weſt, and along the ſea-coaſt, was firſt a Greek colony, afterwards a province of Egypt, and is now loſt in the deſert of Barca. CHAP. I.

From Cyrene to the ocean, the coaſt of Africa extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet ſo cloſely is it preſſed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or ſandy deſert, that its breadth ſeldom exceeds fourſcore or an hundred miles. The eaſtern diviſion was conſidered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the moſt ſavage of mankind. Under the immediate juriſdiction of Carthage, it became the center of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and diſorderly ſtates of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppreſſes the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Maſſiniſſa and Jugurtha: but in the time of Auguſtus, the limits of Numidia were contracted; and, at leaſt, two thirds of the country acquieſced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Cæſarienſis. The genuine Mauritania, or country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, or Tangier, Africa.

CHAP. I.

was distinguished by the appellation of Tingitana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Sallè, on the ocean, so infamous at present for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear, that his more southern dominions, Morocco itself, and Segelmessa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets[86]; but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent[87].

The Mediterranean with its islands.

Having now finished the circuit of the Roman empire, we may observe that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, so famous among the ancients, were two mountains

[86] The long range, moderate height, and gentle declivity of mount Atlas, (see Shaw's Travels, p. 5.) are very unlike a solitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and seems to support the heavens. The peak of Teneriff, on the contrary, rises a league and a half above the surface of the sea, and as it was frequently visited by the Phœnicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. i. p. 312. Histoire des Voyages, tom. ii.

[87] M. de Voltaire, tom. xiv. p. 297. unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary Islands on the Roman empire.

which

which seemed to have been torn asunder by some convulsion of the elements; and at the foot of the European mountain, the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean Sea, its coasts, and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baleares, which derive their name of Majorca and Minorca from their respective size, are subject at present, the former to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. It is easier to deplore the fate, than to describe the actual condition of Corsica. Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms; whilst the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military Order, into fame and opulence. CHAP. I.

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancients. Dazzled with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to forget, the outlying countries which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence; and they gradually usurped the licence of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth[88]. But the General idea of the Roman empire.

[88] Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, l. iii. c. 1, 2, 3, 4. a very useful collection.

temper,

CHAP. I.

temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern hiſtorian, require a more ſober and accurate language. He may impreſs a juſter image of the greatneſs of Rome, by obſerving that the empire was above two thouſand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer; that it extended, in length, more than three thouſand miles from the Weſtern Ocean to the Euphrates; that it was ſituated in the fineſt part of the Temperate Zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-ſixth degrees of northern latitude; and that it was ſuppoſed to contain above ſixteen hundred thouſand ſquare miles, for the moſt part of fertile and well cultivated land [89].

[89] See Templeman's Survey of the Globe; but I diſtruſt both the Doctor's learning and his maps.

CHAP. II.

Of the Union and internal Proſperity of the Roman Empire, in the Age of the Antonines.

CHAP. II. Principles of government.

IT is not alone by the rapidity, or extent of conqueſt, that we ſhould eſtimate the greatneſs of Rome. The ſovereign of the Ruſſian deſerts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the ſeventh ſummer after his paſſage of the Helleſpont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphaſis[1]. Within leſs than a century, the irreſiſtible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, ſpread their cruel devaſtations and tranſient empire, from the ſea of China, to the confines of Egypt and Germany[2]. But the firm edifice of Roman power was raiſed and preſerved by the wiſdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws, and adorned by arts. They might occaſionally ſuffer from the partial abuſe of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wiſe, ſimple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their anceſtors, whilſt in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by juſt degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

[1] They were erected about the midway between Lahor and Delhi. The conqueſts of Alexander in Hindoſtan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great ſtreams of the Indus.

[2] See M. de Guignes, Hiſtoires des Huns, l. xv, xvi, and xvii.

I. The

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Univerſal ſpirit of toleration.

I. The policy of the emperors and the ſenate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily ſeconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the ſuperſtitious, part of their ſubjects. The various modes of worſhip, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all conſidered by the people, as equally true; by the philoſopher, as equally falſe; and by the magiſtrate, as equally uſeful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

Of the people.

The ſuperſtition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour; nor was it confined by the chains of any ſpeculative ſyſtem. The devout polytheiſt, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth[3]. Fear, gratitude, and curioſity, a dream or an omen, a ſingular diſorder, or a diſtant journey, perpetually diſpoſed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the liſt of his protectors. The thin texture of the Pagan mythology was interwoven with various, but not diſcordant materials. As ſoon as it was allowed that ſages and heroes, who had lived, or

[3] There is not any writer who deſcribes, in ſo lively a manner as Herodotus, the true genius of Polytheiſm. The beſt commentary may be found in Mr. Hume's Natural Hiſtory of Religion; and the beſt contraſt in Boſſuet's Univerſal Hiſtory. Some obſcure traces of an intolerant ſpirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (ſee Juvenal, Sat. xv.); and the Chriſtians as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception: ſo important indeed, that the diſcuſſion will require a diſtinct chapter of this work.

who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a ſtate of power and immortality, it was univerſally confeſſed, that they deſerved, if not the adoration, at leaſt the reverence, of all mankind. The deities of a thouſand groves and a thouſand ſtreams poſſeſſed, in peace, their local and reſpective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian who preſented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The viſible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the ſame throughout the univerſe. The inviſible governors of the moral world were inevitably caſt in a ſimilar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine repreſentative; every art and profeſſion its patron, whoſe attributes, in the moſt diſtant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of ſuch oppoſite tempers and intereſt required, in every ſyſtem, the moderating hand of a ſupreme magiſtrate, who, by the progreſs of knowledge and flattery, was gradually inveſted with the ſublime perfections of an Eternal Parent, and an Omnipotent Monarch *. Such was the mild ſpirit of antiquity, that the nations were leſs attentive to the difference, than to the reſemblance, of their religious worſhip. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as

CHAP. II.

* The rights, powers, and pretenſions of the ſovereign of Olympus, are very clearly deſcribed in the xvth book of the Iliad: in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has improved the theology of Homer.

they

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they met before their reſpective altars, eaſily perſuaded themſelves, that under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the ſame deities. The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful, and almoſt a regular form, to the polytheiſm of the ancient world[5].

Of philoſophers.

The philoſophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man, rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature, as a very curious and important ſpeculation; and in the profound inquiry, they diſplayed the ſtrength and weakneſs of the human underſtanding[6]. Of the four moſt celebrated ſchools, the Stoics and the Platoniſts endeavoured to reconcile the jarring intereſts of reaſon and piety. They have left us the moſt ſublime proofs of the exiſtence and perfections of the firſt cauſe; but as it was impoſſible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philoſophy was not ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from the work; whilſt, on the contrary, the ſpiritual God of Plato and his diſciples, reſembled an idea, rather than a ſubſtance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a leſs religious caſt; but whilſt the modeſt ſcience of the former induced them to doubt, the poſitive ig-

5 See for inſtance, Cæſar. de Bell. Gall. vi. 17. Within a century or two the Gauls themſelves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, Apollo, &c.

6 The admirable work of Cicero de Naturâ Deorum, is the beſt clue we have to guide us through the dark and profound abyſs. He repreſents with candour, and confutes with ſubtlety, the opinions of the philoſophers.

norance

norance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The ſpirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation, and ſupported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philoſophy into a variety of contending ſects; but the ingenuous youth, who, from every part, reſorted to Athens, and the other ſeats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike inſtructed in every ſchool to reject and to deſpiſe the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it poſſible, that a philoſopher ſhould accept, as divine truths, the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity; or, that he ſhould adore, as gods, thoſe imperfect beings whom he muſt have deſpiſed, as men! Againſt ſuch unworthy adverſaries, Cicero condeſcended to employ the arms of reaſon and eloquence; but the ſatire of Lucian was a much more adequate, as well as more efficacious weapon. We may be well aſſured, that a writer converſant with the world, would never have ventured to expoſe the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of ſecret contempt among the poliſhed and enlightened orders of ſociety [7].

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Notwithſtanding the faſhionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the intereſts of the prieſts and the credulity of the people were ſufficiently reſpected. In their writings and converſation, the philoſophers of

7 I do not pretend to aſſert, that, in this irreligious age, the natural terrors of ſuperſtition, dreams, omens, apparitions, &c. had loſt their efficacy.

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antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing, with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods; and sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith, or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached, with the same inward contempt, and the same external reverence, the altars of the Lybian, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter [8].

Of the magistrate.

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind, though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators; and the office of Supreme

[8] Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, and Plutarch, always inculcated a decent reverence for the religion of their own country, and of mankind. The devotion of Epicurus was assiduous and exemplary. Diogen. Laert. x. 10.

Pontiff

Pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals, which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination, as a convenient instrument of policy; and they respected as the firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion, that, either in this or in a future life, the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods[9]. But whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced, that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes: and that, in every country, the form of superstition which had received the sanction of time and experience, was the best adapted to the climate, and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods, and the rich ornaments of their temples[10]; but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tibe-

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In the provinces;

9 Polybius, l. vi. c. 53, 54. Juvenal, Sat. xiii. laments that in his time this apprehension had lost much of its effect.

10 See the fate of Syracuse, Tarentum, Ambracia, Corinth, &c. the conduct of Verres, in Cicero (Actio ii. Orat. 4.), and the usual practice of governors, in the viiith Satire of Juvenal.

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rius and Claudius ſuppreſſed the dangerous power of the Druids [11]: but the prieſts themſelves, their gods and their altars, ſubſiſted in peaceful obſcurity till the final deſtruction of Paganiſm [12].

at Rome.

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was inceſſantly filled with ſubjects and ſtrangers from every part of the world [13], who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite ſuperſtitions of their native country [14]. Every city in the empire was juſtified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies; and, the Roman ſenate uſing the common privilege, ſometimes interpoſed, to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian ſuperſtition, of all the moſt contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Iſis demoliſhed, and their worſhippers baniſhed from Rome and Italy [15]. But the zeal of fanaticiſm prevailed over the cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proſelytes multiplied, the temples were reſtored with increaſing ſplendor, and Iſis and

[11] Sueton. in Claud.—Plin. Hiſt. Nat. xxx. 1.

[12] Pelloutier Hiſtoire des Celtes, tom. vi. p. 230—252.

[13] Seneca Conſolat. ad Helviam, p. 74. Edit. Lipſ.

[14] Dionyſius Halicarn. Antiquitat. Roman. l. ii.

[15] In the year of Rome 701, the temple of Iſis and Serapis was demoliſhed by the order of the Senate (Dion Caſſius, l. xl. p. 252.), and even by the hands of the conſul (Valerius Maximus, i. 3.). After the death of Cæſar, it was reſtored at the public expence (Dion, l. xlvii. p. 501.). When Auguſtus was in Egypt, he revered the majeſty of Serapis (Dion, l. li. p. 647.); but in the Pomærium of Rome, and a mile round it, he prohibited the worſhip of the Egyptian gods (Dion, l. liii. p. 679. l. liv. p. 735.). They remained, however, very faſhionable under his reign (Ovid. de Art. Amand. l. i.) and that of his ſucceſſor, till the juſtice of Tiberius was provoked to ſome acts of ſeverity. (See Tacit. Annal. ii. 85. Joſeph. Antiquit. l. xviii. c. 3.)

Serapis at length aſſumed their place among the Roman deities [16]. Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the pureſt ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Æſculapius had been invited by ſolemn embaſſies [17]; and it was cuſtomary to tempt the protectors of beſieged cities, by the promiſe of more diſtinguiſhed honours than they poſſeſſed in their native country [18]. Rome gradually became the common temple of her ſubjects; and the freedom of the city was beſtowed on all the gods of mankind [19]. CHAP. II.

II. The narrow policy of preſerving, without any foreign mixture, the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune, and haſtened the ruin, of Athens and Sparta. The aſpiring genius of Rome ſacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own, whereſoever they were found, among ſlaves or ſtrangers, enemies or barbarians [20]. During the moſt flouriſhing æra of the Athenian commonwealth, the number of citizens gradually decreaſed from about thirty [21] to twenty-one thou- Freedom of Rome.

16 Tertullian in Apologetic. c. 6. p. 74. Edit. Havercamp. I am inclined to attribute their eſtabliſhment to the devotion of the Flavian family.

17 See Livy, l. xi. and xxix.

18 Macrob. Saturnalia, l. iii. c. 9. He gives us a form of evocation.

19 Minutius Fælix in Octavio, p. 54. Arnobius, l. vi. p. 115.

20 Tacit. Annal. xi. 24. The Orbis Romanus of the learned Spanheim is a complete hiſtory of the progreſſive admiſſion of Latium, Italy, and the provinces, to the freedom of Rome.

21 Herodotus, v. 97. It ſhould ſeem, however, that he followed a large and popular eſtimation.

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ſand [22]. If, on the contrary, we ſtudy the growth of the Roman republic, we may diſcover, that, notwithſtanding the inceſſant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the firſt cenſus of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thouſand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the ſocial war, to the number of four hundred and ſixty-three thouſand men, able to bear arms in the ſervice of their country [23]. When the allies of Rome claimed an equal ſhare of honours and privileges, the ſenate indeed preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious conceſſion. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the ſevere penalty of their raſhneſs; but the reſt of the Italian ſtates, as they ſucceſſively returned to their duty, were admitted into the boſom of the republic [24], and ſoon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government, the citizens exerciſe the powers of ſovereignty; and thoſe powers will be firſt abuſed, and afterwards loſt, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But when the popular aſſemblies had been ſuppreſſed by the adminiſtration of the emperors, the conquerors were diſtinguiſhed from the vanquiſhed nations, only as the firſt and moſt honourable order of ſubjects; and their increaſe, however rapid, was no longer expoſed to the ſame dangers.

[22] Athenæus, Deipnoſophiſt. l. vi. p 272. Edit. Caſaubon. Meurſius de Fortunâ Atticâ, c. 4.

[23] See a very accurate collection of the numbers of each Luſtrum in M. de Beaufort, Republique Romaine, l. iv. c. 4.

[24] Appian. de Bell. Civil. l. i. Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 15, 16, 17.

Yet

Yet the wiſeſt princes, who adopted the maxims of Auguſtus, guarded with the ſtricteſt care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffuſed the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality [25]. CHAP. II.

Till the privileges of Romans had been progreſſively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important diſtinction was preſerved between Italy and the provinces. The former was eſteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm baſis of the conſtitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at leaſt the reſidence, of the emperors and the ſenate [26]. The eſtates of the Italians were exempt from taxes, their perſons from the arbitrary juriſdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital, were intruſted, under the immediate eye of the ſupreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial diſtinctions were obliterated, and they inſenſibly coaleſced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil inſtitutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the merit and ſervices of Italy.

[25] Mæcenas had adviſed him to declare by one edict, all his ſubjects, citizens. But we may juſtly ſuſpect that the hiſtorian Dion was the author of a counſel, ſo much adapted to the practice of his own age, and ſo little to that of Auguſtus.

[26] The ſenators were obliged to have one third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. l. vi. ep. 19. The qualification was reduced by Marcus to one-fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had ſunk nearer to the level of the provinces.

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her adopted ſons. Had ſhe always confined the diſtinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of ſome of its nobleſt ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he ſhould call himſelf an Apulian or a Lucanian: it was in Padua that an hiſtorian was found worthy to record the majeſtic ſeries of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tuſculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honour of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deſerved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be ſtyled the Third Founder of Rome; and the latter, after ſaving his country from the deſigns of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence [27].

The provinces.

The provinces of the empire (as they have been deſcribed in the preceding chapter) were deſtitute of any public force, or conſtitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece [28], and in Gaul [29], it was the firſt care of the ſenate to diſſolve thoſe dangerous confederacies, which taught mankind, that as the Roman arts prevailed by diviſion,

[27] The firſt part of the Verona Illuſtrata of the Marquis Maffei, gives the cleareſt and moſt comprehenſive view of the ſtate of Italy under the Cæſars.

[28] See Pauſanias, l. vii. The Romans condeſcended to reſtore the names of thoſe aſſemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.

[29] They are frequently mentioned by Cæſar. The Abbé Dubos attempts, with very little ſucceſs, to prove that the aſſemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. Hiſtoire de l'Etabliſſement de la Monarchie Françoiſe, l. i. c. 4.

they

they might be reſiſted by union. Thoſe princes, whom the oſtentation of gratitude or generoſity permitted for a while to hold a precarious ſceptre, were diſmiſſed from their thrones, as ſoon as they had performed their appointed taſk of faſhioning to the yoke the vanquiſhed nations. The free ſtates and cities which had embraced the cauſe of Rome, were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and inſenſibly ſunk into real ſervitude. The public authority was every where exerciſed by the miniſters of the ſenate and of the emperors, and that authority was abſolute, and without controul. But the ſame ſalutary maxims of government, which had ſecured the peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the moſt diſtant conqueſts. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the moſt faithful and deſerving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

Colonies and municipal towns.

"Whereſoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits," is a very juſt obſervation of Seneca[30], confirmed by hiſtory and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleaſure or by intereſt, haſtened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may remark, that about forty years after the reduction of Aſia, eighty thouſand Romans were maſſacred in one day, by the cruel orders of Mithridates[31]. Theſe voluntary exiles were en-

[30] Seneca in Conſolat. ad Helviam, c. 6.

[31] Memnon apud Photium, c. 33. Valer. Maxim. ix. 2. Plutarch and Dion Caſſius ſwell the maſſacre to 150,000 citizens; but I ſhould eſteem the ſmaller number to be more than ſufficient.

gaged,

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gaged, for the moſt part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of ſoldiers; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their ſervice in land or in money, uſually ſettled with their families in the country, where they had honourably ſpent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the weſtern parts, the moſt fertile diſtricts, and the moſt convenient ſituations, were reſerved for the eſtabliſhment of colonies; ſome of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect repreſentation of their great parent: and they were ſoon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendſhip and alliance, they effectually diffuſed a reverence for the Roman name, and a deſire, which was ſeldom diſappointed, of ſharing, in due time, its honours and advantages[32]. The municipal cities inſenſibly equalled the rank and ſplendour of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian, it was diſputed which was the preferable condition, of thoſe ſocieties which had iſſued from, or thoſe which had been received into, the boſom of Rome[33]. The right of Latium, as

[32] Twenty-five colonies were ſettled in Spain (ſee Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 3, 4. iv. 35.): and nine in Britain, of which London, Colcheſter, Lincoln, Cheſter, Glouceſter, and Bath, ſtill remain conſiderable cities (ſee Richard of Cirenceſter, p. 36. and Whitaker's Hiſtory of Mancheſter, l. i. c. 3.).

[33] Aul. Gell. Noctes Atticæ, xvi. 13. The emperor Hadrian expreſſed his ſurpriſe, that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Italica, which

as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted, a more partial favour. The magiſtrates only, at the expiration of their office, aſſumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as thoſe offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families[34]. Thoſe of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions[35]; thoſe who exerciſed any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public ſervice, or diſplayed any perſonal talents, were rewarded with a preſent, whoſe value was continually diminiſhed by the increaſing liberality of the emperors. Yet even, in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been beſtowed on the greater number of their ſubjects, it was ſtill accompanied with very ſolid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the intereſting articles of marriage, teſtaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to thoſe whoſe pretenſions were ſeconded by favour or merit. The grandſons of the Gauls, who had beſieged Julius Cæſar in Aleſia, commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the ſenate of Rome[36]. Their ambition, inſtead of diſturbing the tranquillity of the ſtate, was intimately connected with its ſafety and greatneſs.

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which already enjoyed the rights of *Municipia*, ſhould ſolicit the title of *colonies*. Their example, however, became faſhionable, and the empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, de Uſu Numiſmatum, Diſſertat. xiii.

34 Spanheim, Orbis Roman. c. 8. p. 62.

35 Ariſtid. in Romæ Encomio, tom. i. p. 218. Edit. Jebb.

36 Tacit. Annal. xi. 23, 24. Hiſt. iv. 74.

So

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Diviſion of the Latin and the Greek provinces.

So ſenſible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their moſt ſerious care to extend, with the progreſs of their arms, the uſe of the Latin tongue [37]. The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruſcan, and the Venetian, ſunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the eaſt was leſs docile than the weſt, to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a diſtinction of colours, which, though it was in ſome degree concealed during the meridian ſplendor of proſperity, became gradually more viſible, as the ſhades of night deſcended upon the Roman world. The weſtern countries were civilized by the ſame hands which ſubdued them. As ſoon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impreſſions of knowledge and politeneſs. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with ſome inevitable mixture of corruption, was ſo univerſally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia [38], that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preſerved only in the mountains, or among the peaſants [39]. Education and ſtudy inſenſibly

37 See Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5. Auguſtin. de Civitate Dei, xix. 7. Lipſius de pronunciatione Linguæ Latinæ, c. 3.

38 Apuleius and Auguſtin will anſwer for Africa; Strabo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus, for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inſcriptions.

39 The Celtic was preſerved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica. We may obſerve that Apuleius reproaches an Africa

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ſenſibly inſpired the natives of thoſe countries with the ſentiments of Romans; and Italy gave faſhions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They ſolicited with more ardour, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honours of the ſtate; ſupported the national dignity in letters[40] and in arms; and, at length, in the perſon of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have diſowned for their countryman. The ſituation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long ſince civiliſed and corrupted. They had too much taſte to relinquiſh their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign inſtitutions. Still preſerving the prejudices, after they had loſt the virtues, of their anceſtors, they affected to deſpiſe the unpoliſhed manners of the Roman conquerors, whilſt they were compelled to reſpect their ſuperior wiſdom and power[41]. Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and ſentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progreſs of colonies and conqueſt, had been diffuſed from the Hadriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Aſia

African youth, who lived among the populace, with the uſe of the Punic; whilſt he had almoſt forgot Greek, and neither could nor would ſpeak Latin (Apolog. p. 596.). The greater part of St. Auſtin's congregations were ſtrangers to the Punic.

[40] Spain alone produced Columella, the Senecas, Lucan, Martial, and Quintilian.

[41] There is not, I believe, from Dionyſius to Libanus, a ſingle Greek critic who mentions Virgil or Horace. They ſeem ignorant that the Romans had any good writers.

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was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a ſilent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts thoſe princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the Eaſt, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble diſtance, by the higher ranks of their ſubjects. Such was the general diviſion of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To theſe we may add a third diſtinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and eſpecially in Egypt. The uſe of their ancient dialects, by ſecluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of thoſe barbarians[42]. The ſlothful effeminacy of the former, expoſed them to the contempt, the ſullen ferociouſneſs of the latter, excited the averſion of the conquerors[43]. Thoſe nations had ſubmitted to the Roman power, but they ſeldom deſired or deſerved the freedom of the city: and it was remarked, that more than two hundred and thirty years elapſed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the ſenate of Rome[44].

General uſe of both languages.

It is a juſt though trite obſervation, that victorious Rome was herſelf ſubdued by the arts of Greece. Thoſe immortal writers who ſtill command the admiration of modern Europe, ſoon became the favourite object of ſtudy and imita-

42 The curious reader may ſee in Dupin (Bibliotheque Eccleſiaſtique, tom. xix. p. 1. c. 8.) how much the uſe of the Syriac and Egyptian languages was ſtill preſerved.

43 See Juvenal, Sat. iii. and xv. Ammian. Marcelin. xxii. 16.

44 Dion Caſſius, l. lxxvii. p. 1275. The firſt inſtance happened under the reign of Septimius Severus.

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tion in Italy and the weſtern provinces. But the elegant amuſements of the Romans were not ſuffered to interfere with their ſound maxims of policy. Whilſt they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they aſſerted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the excluſive uſe of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the adminiſtration of civil as well as military government[45]. The two languages exerciſed at the ſame time their ſeparate juriſdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of ſcience; the latter, as the legal dialect of public tranſactions. Thoſe who united letters with buſineſs, were equally converſant with both; and it was almoſt impoſſible, in any province, to find a Roman ſubject, of a liberal education, who was at once a ſtranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

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It was by ſuch inſtitutions that the nations of the empire inſenſibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there ſtill remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without ſharing the benefits, of ſociety. In the free ſtates of antiquity, the domeſtic ſlaves were expoſed to the wanton rigour of deſpotiſm. The perfect ſettlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The ſlaves conſiſted, for the moſt part, of barbarian captives, taken in thouſands

Slaves.

Their treatment.

45 See Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 2. n. 2. The emperor Claudius disfranchiſed an eminent Grecian for not underſtanding Latin. He was probably in ſome public office. Suetonius in Claud. c. 16.

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by the chance of war, purchaſed at a vile price[46], accuſtomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Againſt ſuch internal enemies, whoſe deſperate inſurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of deſtruction[47], the moſt ſevere regulations[48], and the moſt cruel treatment, ſeemed almoſt juſtified by the great law of ſelf-preſervation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, were united under the laws of one ſovereign, the ſource of foreign ſupplies flowed with much leſs abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. In their numerous families, and particularly in their country eſtates, they encouraged the marriage of their ſlaves. The ſentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the poſſeſſion of a dependent ſpecies of property, contributed to alleviate the hardſhips of ſervitude[49]. The exiſtence of a ſlave became an object of greater value, and though his happineſs ſtill depended on the temper and circumſtances of the maſter, the humanity of the latter, inſtead of being reſtrained by

46 In the camp of Lucullus, an ox ſold for a drachma, and a ſlave for four drachmæ, or about three ſhillings. Plutarch. in Lucull. p. 580.

47 Diodorus Siculus in Eclog. Hiſt. l. xxxiv. and xxxvi. Florus, iii. 19, 20.

48 See a remarkable inſtance of ſeverity in Cicero in Verrem, v. 3.

49 See in Gruter, and the other collectors, a great number of inſcriptions addreſſed by ſlaves to their wives, children, fellow-ſervants, maſters, &c. They are all moſt probably of the Imperial age.

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fear, was encouraged by the ſenſe of his own intereſt. The progreſs of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, the protection of the laws was extended to the moſt abject part of mankind. The juriſdiction of life and death over the ſlaves, a power long exerciſed and often abuſed, was taken out of private hands, and reſerved to the magiſtrates alone. The ſubterraneous priſons were aboliſhed; and, upon a juſt complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured ſlave obtained either his deliverance, or a leſs cruel maſter [50]. CHAP. II.

Hope, the beſt comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman ſlave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himſelf either uſeful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the ineſtimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the maſter was ſo frequently prompted by the meaner ſuggeſtions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more neceſſary to reſtrain than to encourage a profuſe and undiſtinguiſhing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuſe [51]. It was a maxim of ancient juriſprudence, that a ſlave had not any country of his own, he acquired with his liberty an admiſſion into the political ſociety of which his patron was a member. The Enfranchiſement.

[50] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, and a Diſſertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxvth volume of the Academy of Inſcriptions, upon the Roman ſlaves.

[51] See another Diſſertation of M. de Burigny, in the xxxviith volume, on the Roman freedmen.

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consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable distinction was confined to such slaves only, as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, *they* likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation [52]. Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

Numbers.

It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit; but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers [53]. Without interpreting, in their utmost strictness, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads [54]; we

[52] Spanheim, Orbis Roman. l. i. c. 16. p. 124, &c.

[53] Seneca de Clementiâ, l. i. c. 24. The original is much stronger, "Quantum periculum immineret si servi nostri numerare nos cœpissent."

[54] See Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxxiii.) and Athenæus (Deipnosophist. l. vi. p. 272.). The latter boldly asserts, that he knew very many (παμπολλοι) Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ten and even twenty thousand slaves.

may venture to pronounce, that the proportion of ſlaves, who were valued as property, was more conſiderable than that of ſervants, who can be computed only as an expence [55]. The youths of a promiſing genius were inſtructed in the arts and ſciences, and their price was aſcertained by the degree of their ſkill and talents [56]. Almoſt every profeſſion, either liberal [57] or mechanical, might be found in the houſehold of an opulent ſenator. The miniſters of pomp and ſenſuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury [58]. It was more for the intereſt of the merchant or manufacturer to purchaſe, than to hire his workmen; and in the country, ſlaves were employed as the cheapeſt and moſt laborious inſtruments of agriculture. To confirm the general obſervation, and to diſplay the multitude of ſlaves, we might allege a variety of particular inſtances. It was diſcovered, on a very melancholy occaſion, that four hundred ſlaves were maintained in a ſingle palace of Rome [59]. The ſame number of four hundred belonged to an eſtate which an African widow, of a very private

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55 In Paris there are not more than 43,700 domeſtics of every ſort, and not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. Meſſange Recherches ſur la Population, p. 186.

56 A learned ſlave ſold for many hundred pounds ſterling: Atticus always bred and taught them himſelf. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. c. 13.

57 Many of the Roman phyſicians were ſlaves. See Dr. Middleton's Diſſertation and Defence.

58 Their ranks and offices are very copiouſly enumerated by Pignorius de Servis.

59 Tacit. Annal. xiv. 43. They were all executed for not preventing their maſter's murder.

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condition, reſigned to her ſon, whilſt ſhe reſerved for herſelf a much larger ſhare of her property [60]. A freedman, under the reign of Auguſtus, though his fortune had ſuffered great loſſes in the civil wars, left behind him three thouſand ſix hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thouſand head of ſmaller cattle, and, what was almoſt included in the deſcription of cattle, four thouſand one hundred and ſixteen ſlaves [61].

Populouſneſs of the Roman empire.

The number of ſubjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of ſlaves, cannot now be fixed with ſuch a degree of accuracy as the importance of the object would deſerve. We are informed, that when the emperor Claudius exerciſed the office of cenſor, he took an account of ſix millions nine hundred and forty-five thouſand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, muſt have amounted to about twenty millions of ſouls. The multitude of ſubjects of an inferior rank, was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumſtance which could influence the balance, it ſeems probable, that there exiſted, in the time of Claudius, about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either ſex, and of every age; and that the ſlaves were at leaſt equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. The total amount of this imperfect calculation would riſe to about one hundred and twenty millions of perſons: a degree of popu-

[60] Apuleius in Apolog. p. 548. Edit. Delphin.
[61] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xxxiii. 47.

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lation which poſſibly exceeds that of modern Europe [62], and forms the moſt numerous ſociety that has ever been united under the ſame ſyſtem of government. CHAP. II.

Obedience and union.

Domeſtic peace and union were the natural conſequences of the moderate and comprehenſive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Aſia, we ſhall behold deſpotiſm in the centre, and weakneſs in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the adminiſtration of juſtice, enforced by the preſence of an army; hoſtile barbarians eſtabliſhed in the heart of the country, hereditary ſatraps uſurping the dominion of the provinces, and ſubjects inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquiſhed nations, blended into one great people, reſigned the hope, nay even the wiſh, of reſuming their independence, and ſcarcely conſidered their own exiſtence as diſtinct from the exiſtence of Rome. The eſtabliſhed authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exerciſed with the ſame facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on thoſe of the Tyber. The

[62] Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy with its iſlands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Ruſſia, ſix in Poland, ſix in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five, or one hundred and ſeven millions. See Voltaire, de Hiſtoire Generale.

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legions were deſtined to ſerve againſt the public enemy, and the civil magiſtrate ſeldom required the aid of a military force [63]. In this ſtate of general ſecurity, the leiſure as well as opulence both of the prince and people, were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

Roman monuments.

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture conſtructed by the Romans, how many have eſcaped the notice of hiſtory, how few have reſiſted the ravages of time and barbariſm! And yet even the majeſtic ruins that are ſtill ſcattered over Italy and the provinces, would be ſufficient to prove, that thoſe countries were once the ſeat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatneſs alone, or their beauty, might deſerve our attention: but they are rendered more intereſting, by two important circumſtances, which connect the agreeable hiſtory of the arts, with the more uſeful hiſtory of human manners. Many of thoſe works were erected at private expence, and almoſt all were intended for public benefit.

Many of them erected at private expence.

It is natural to ſuppoſe that the greateſt number, as well as the moſt conſiderable of the Roman edifices, were raiſed by the emperors, who poſſeſſed ſo unbounded a command both of men and money. Auguſtus was accuſtomed to boaſt that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble [64]. The ſtrict œconomy of

[63] Joſeph. de Bell. Judaico, l. ii. c. 16. The oration of Agrippa, or rather of the hiſtorian, is a fine picture of the Roman empire.

[64] Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 28. Auguſtus built in Rome the temple and forum of Mars the Avenger; the temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Capitol;

of Veſpaſian was the ſource of his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the ſtamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire, were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inſpection. He was himſelf an artiſt; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the monarch. They were encouraged by the Antonines, as they contributed to the happineſs of the people. But if the emperors were the firſt, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was univerſally imitated by their principal ſubjects, who were not afraid of declaring to the world that they had ſpirit to conceive, and wealth to accompliſh, the nobleſt undertakings. Scarcely had the proud ſtructure of the Coliſeum been dedicated at Rome, before the edifices, of a ſmaller ſcale indeed, but of the ſame deſign and materials, were erected for the uſe, and at the expence, of the cities of Capua and Verona [65]. The inſcription of the ſtupendous bridge of Alcantary, atteſts that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Luſitanian communities. When Pliny was intruſted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richeſt or moſt conſiderable of the empire, he found the cities within his juriſdiction ſtriving with each

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Capitol; that of Apollo Palatine, with public libraries; the portico and baſilica of Caius and Lucius; the porticos of Livia and Octavia; and the theatre of Marcellus. The example of the ſovereign was imitated by his miniſters and generals; and his friend Agrippa left behind him the immortal monument of the Pantheon.

[65] See Maffei, Verona illuſtrata, l. iv. p. 68.

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other in every useful and ornamental work, that might deserve the curiosity of strangers, or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the Proconsul to supply their deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation [66]. The opulent senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honour, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendor of their age and country; and the influence of fashion very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors, we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

Example of Herodes Atticus.

The family of Herod, at least after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of law, the emperor might have asserted his claim, and the

[66] See the xth book of Pliny's Epistles. He mentions the following works, carried on at the expence of the cities. At Nicomedia, a new forum, an aqueduct, and a canal, left unfinished by a king; at Nice, a Gymnasium, and a theatre which had already cost near ninety thousand pounds; baths at Prusa and Claudiopolis; and an aqueduct of sixteen miles in length for the use of Sinope.

prudent

prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confeſſion, the officiouſneſs of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refuſed to accept any part of it, and commanded him to uſe, without ſcruple, the preſent of fortune. The cautious Athenian ſtill inſiſted, that the treaſure was too conſiderable for a ſubject, and that he knew not how to *uſe it*. *Abuſe it, then*, replied the monarch, with a good-natured peeviſhneſs; for it is your own [67]. Many will be of opinion, that Atticus literally obeyed the emperor's laſt inſtructions; ſince he expended the greateſt part of his fortune, which was much increaſed by an advantageous marriage, in the ſervice of the Public. He had obtained for his ſon Herod, the prefecture of the free cities of Aſia; and the young magiſtrate, obſerving that the town of Troas was indifferently ſupplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian, three hundred millions of drachms (about a hundred thouſand pounds) for the conſtruction of a new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work, the charge amounted to more than double the eſtimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus ſilenced their complaints, by requeſting that he might be permitted to take upon himſelf the whole additional expence [68].

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[67] Hadrian afterwards made a very equitable regulation, which divided all treaſure-trove between the right of property and that of diſcovery. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 9.

[68] Philoſtrat. in Vit. Sophiſt. l. ii. p. 548.

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His reputation.

The ableſt preceptors of Greece and Aſia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil ſoon became a celebrated orator, according to the uſeleſs rhetoric of that age, which, confining itſelf to the ſchools, diſdained to viſit either the Forum or the Senate. He was honoured with the conſulſhip at Rome; but the greateſt part of his life was ſpent in a philoſophic retirement at Athens, and his adjacent villas; perpetually ſurrounded by ſophiſts, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the ſuperiority of a rich and generous rival [69]. The monuments of his genius have periſhed; ſome conſiderable ruins ſtill preſerve the fame of his taſte and munificence: modern travellers have meaſured the remains of the ſtadium which he conſtructed at Athens. It was ſix hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finiſhed in four years, whilſt Herod was preſident of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla, he dedicated a theatre, ſcarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar, very curiouſly carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum, deſigned by Pericles for muſical performances, and the rehearſal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over Barbaric greatneſs: as the timbers employed in the conſtruction conſiſted chiefly of the maſts of the Perſian veſſels. Notwithſtand-

[69] Aulus Gellius, in Noct. Attic. i. 2. ix. 2. xviii. 10. xix. 12. Philoſtrat. p. 564.

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ing the repairs beſtowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia; it was again fallen to decay. Herod reſtored its ancient beauty and magnificence. Nor was the liberality of that illuſtrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The moſt ſplendid ornaments beſtowed on the temple of Neptune in the Iſthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a ſtadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Canuſium in Italy, were inſufficient to exhauſt his treaſures. The people of Epirus, Theſſaly, Eubœa, Bœotia, and Peloponneſus, experienced his favours; and many inſcriptions of the cities of Greece and Aſia gratefully ſtyle Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor [70].

Moſt of the Roman monuments for public uſe; temples, theatres, aqueducts, &c.

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modeſt ſimplicity of private houſes announced the equal condition of freedom; whilſt the ſovereignty of the people was repreſented in the majeſtic edifices deſtined to the public uſe [71]; nor was this republican ſpirit totally extinguiſhed by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honour and benefit, that the moſt virtuous of the emperors affected to diſplay their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a juſt indignation, but the vaſt extent of ground which had been uſurped by his ſelfiſh luxury, was more nobly filled under the

70 See Philoſtrat. l. ii. p. 548. 560. Pauſanias, l. i. and vii. 10. The life of Herodes, in the xxxth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inſcriptions.

71 It is particularly remarked of Athens by Dicæarchus, de Statu Græciæ, p. 8. inter Geographos Minores, edit. Hudſon.

ſucceed-

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ſucceeding reigns by the Coliſeum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddeſs of Peace, and to the genius of Rome[72]. Theſe monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the moſt beautiful productions of Grecian painting and ſculpture; and in the temple of Peace, a very curious library was open to the curioſity of the learned. At a ſmall diſtance from thence was ſituated the Forum of Trajan. It was ſurrounded with a lofty portico, in the form of a quadrangle, into which four triumphal arches opened a noble and ſpacious entrance: in the centre aroſe a column of marble, whoſe height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which ſtill ſubſiſts in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact repreſentation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran ſoldier contemplated the ſtory of his own campaigns, and by an eaſy illuſion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen aſſociated himſelf to the honours of the triumph. All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire, were embelliſhed by the ſame liberal ſpirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, tri-

[72] Donatus de Roma Vetere, l. iii. c. 4, 5, 6. Nardini Roma Antica, l. iii. 11, 12, 13. and a MS. deſcription of ancient Rome, by Bernardus Oricellarius, or Rucellai, of which I obtained a copy from the library of the Canon Ricardi at Florence. Two celebrated pictures of Timanthes and of Protogenes are mentioned by Pliny, as in the Temple of Peace; and the Laocoon was found in the baths of Titus.

umphal

umphal arches, baths, and aqueducts, all variouſly conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleaſures of the meaneſt citizen. The laſt mentioned of thoſe edifices deſerve our peculiar attention. The boldneſs of the enterpriſe, the ſolidity of the execution, and the uſes to which they were ſubſervient, rank the aqueducts among the nobleſt monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of a capital claim a juſt pre-eminence; but the curious traveller, who, without the light of hiſtory, ſhould examine thoſe of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude, that thoſe provincial towns had formerly been the reſidence of ſome potent monarch. The ſolitudes of Aſia and Africa were once covered with flouriſhing cities, whoſe populouſneſs, and even whoſe exiſtence, was derived from ſuch artificial ſupplies of a perennial ſtream of freſh water[73].

Number and greatneſs of the cities of the empire.

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works, of the Roman empire. The obſervation of the number and greatneſs of its cities will ſerve to confirm the former, and to multiply the latter. It may not be unpleaſing to collect a few ſcattered inſtances relative to that ſubject, without forgetting, however, that from the vanity of nations and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently beſtowed on Rome and upon Laurentum. I. *Ancient* Italy is ſaid to have con- In Italy.

[73] Montfaucon l'Antiquité Expliquée, tom. iv. p. 2. l. i. c. 5. Fabretti has compoſed a very learned treatiſe on the aqueducts of Rome.

tained

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tained eleven hundred and ninety-ſeven cities; and for whatſoever æra of antiquity the expreſſion might be intended[74], there is not any reaſon to believe the country leſs populous in the age of the Antonines, than in that of Romulus. The petty ſtates of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whoſe ſuperior influence they had been attracted. Thoſe parts of Italy which have ſo long languiſhed under the lazy tyranny of prieſts and viceroys, had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the firſt ſymptoms of decay, which *they* experienced, were amply compenſated by the rapid improvements of the Ciſalpine Gaul. The ſplendor of Verona may be traced in its remains: yet Verona was leſs celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan or Ravenna. II. The ſpirit of improvement had paſſed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free ſpace for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the ſeat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the ſalutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boaſt of her twelve hundred cities[75]; and though, in the northern parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itſelf, were little more than the rude and imperfect townſhips of a riſing people; the ſouthern provinces imitated the

Gaul and Spain.

74 Ælian. Hiſt. Var. l. ix. c. 16. He lived in the time of Alexander Severus. See Fabricius, Biblioth. Græca, l. iv. c. 21.

75 Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. The number, however, is mentioned, and ſhould be received with a degree of latitude.

wealth

wealth and elegance of Italy[76]. Many were the cities of Gaul, Marſeilles, Arles, Niſmes, Narbonne, Thouloufe, Bourdeaux, Autun, Vienna, Lyons, Langres, and Treves, whoſe ancient condition might ſuſtain an equal, and perhaps advantageous compariſon with their preſent ſtate. With regard to Spain, that country flouriſhed as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhauſted by the abuſe of her ſtrength, by America, and by ſuperſtition, her pride might poſſibly be confounded, if we required ſuch a liſt of three hundred and ſixty cities, as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Veſpaſian[77]. CHAP. II.

III. Three hundred African cities had once acknowledged the authority of Carthage[78], nor is it likely that their numbers diminiſhed under the adminiſtration of the emperors: Carthage itſelf roſe with new ſplendor from its aſhes; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, ſoon recovered all the advantages which can be ſeparated from independent ſovereignty. Africa.

IV. The provinces of the eaſt preſent the contraſt of Roman magnificence with Turkiſh barbariſm. The ruins of antiquity ſcattered over uncultivated fields, and aſcribed, by ignorance, to the power of magic, ſcarcely afforded a ſhelter to the oppreſſed peaſant or wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Cæſars, the proper Aſia alone con- Aſia.

76 Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5.

77 Plin. Hiſt. Natur. iii. 3, 4. iv. 35. The liſt ſeems authentic and accurate: the diviſion of the provinces, and the different condition of the cities, are minutely diſtinguiſhed.

78 Strabon. Geograph. l. xvii. p. 1189.

tained

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tained five hundred populous cities[79], enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had once disputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius, and their respective merits were examined by the senate[80]. Four of them were immediately rejected as unequal to the burden; and among these was Laodicea, whose splendor is still displayed in its ruins[81]. Laodicea collected a very considerable revenue from its flocks of sheep, celebrated for the fineness of their wool, and had received, a little before the contest, a legacy of above four hundred thousand pounds by the testament of a generous citizen[82]. If such was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have been the wealth of those cities, whose claim appeared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Ephesus, who so long disputed with each other the titular primacy of

79 Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16. Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. p. 548. Edit. Olear.

80 Tacit. Annal. iv. 55. I have taken some pains in consulting and comparing modern travellers, with regard to the fate of those eleven cities of Asia; seven or eight are totally destroyed, Hypæpe, Tralles, Laodicea, Ilium, Halicarnassus, Miletus, Ephesus, and we may add Sardes. Of the remaining three, Pergamus is a straggling village of two or three thousand inhabitants: Magnesia, under the name of Guzel-hissar, a town of some consequence; and Smyrna, a great city, peopled by an hundred thousand souls. But even at Smyrna, while the Franks have maintained commerce, the Turks have ruined the arts.

81 See a very exact and pleasing description of the ruins of Laodicea, in Chandler's Travels through Asia Minor, p. 225, &c.

82 Strabo, l. xii. p. 866. He had studied at Tralles.

Asia?

Aſia[83]? The capitals of Syria and Egypt held a ſtill ſuperior rank in the empire: Antioch and Alexandria looked down with diſdain on a crowd of dependent cities[84], and yielded, with reluctance, to the majeſty of Rome itſelf. CHAP. II.

Roman roads.

All theſe cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, iſſuing from the Forum of Rome, traverſed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the diſtance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jeruſalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication, from the north-weſt to the ſouth-eaſt point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thouſand and eighty Roman miles[85]. The public roads were accurately divided by mile-ſtones, and ran in a direct line from one

[83] See a Diſſertation of M. de Boze, Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xviii. Ariſtides pronounced an oration which is ſtill extant, to recommend concord to the rival cities.

[84] The inhabitants of Egypt, excluſive of Alexandria, amounted to ſeven millions and a half (Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 16.). Under the military government of the Mamalukes, Syria was ſuppoſed to contain ſixty thouſand villages (Hiſtoire de Timur Bec, l. v. c. 20.).

[85] The following Itinerary may ſerve to convey ſome idea of the direction of the road, and of the diſtance between the principal towns. I. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. II. London 227. III. Rhutupiæ or Sandwich 67. IV. The navigation to Boulogne 45. V. Rheims 174. VI. Lyons 330. VII. Milan 324. VIII. Rome 426. IX. Brunduſium 360. X. The navigation to Dyrrachium 40. XI. Byzantium 711. XII. Ancyra 283. XIII. Tarſus 301. XIV. Antioch 141. XV. Tyre 252. XVI. Jeruſalem 168. In all 4080 Roman, or 3740 Engliſh miles. See the Itineraries publiſhed by Weſſeling, his annotations; Gale and Stukeley for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy.

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city to another, with very little reſpect for the obſtacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadeſt and moſt rapid ſtreams[86]. The middle part of the road was raiſed into a terrace which commanded the adjacent country, conſiſted of ſeveral ſtrata of ſand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large ſtones, or in ſome places, near the capital, with granite[87]. Such was the ſolid conſtruction of the Roman highways, whoſe firmneſs has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the ſubjects of the moſt diſtant provinces by an eaſy and familiar intercourſe; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country conſidered as completely ſubdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earlieſt intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to eſtabliſh, throughout their extenſive dominions, the regular inſtitution of poſts[88]. Houſes were every where erected at the diſtance only of five or ſix miles; each of them was conſtantly provided with forty horſes, and by the help of theſe relays, it was eaſy to travel an hundred

Poſts.

[86] Montfaucon, l'Antiquité Expliquée (tom. iv. p. 2. l. i. c. 5.), has deſcribed the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Niſmes, &c.

[87] Bergier Hiſtoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, l. ii. c. 1—28.

[88] Procopius in Hiſt. Arcanâ, c. 30. Bergier Hiſt. des grands Chemins, l. iv. Codex Theodoſian. l. viii. tit. v. vol. ii. p. 506—563. with Godefroy's learned commentary.

miles

miles in a day along the Roman roads[89]. The use of the posts was allowed to those who claimed it by an Imperial mandate; but though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or convenience of private citizens[90]. Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and inclosed the Mediterranean; and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake. The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbours; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tyber, and formed by the emperor Claudius, was an useful monument of Roman greatness[91]. From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten, to Alexandria in Egypt[92].

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Navigation.

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of

Improvement of agriculture

[89] In the time of Theodosius, Cæsarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was 725 Roman, or 665 English miles. See Libanius Orat. xxii. and the Itineraria, p. 572—581.

[90] Pliny, though a favourite and a minister, made an apology for granting post-horses to his wife on the most urgent business. Epist. x. 121, 122.

[91] Bergier Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv. c. 49.

[92] Plin. Hist. Natur. xix. 1.

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in the western countries of the empire.

Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The east was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury; whilst the west was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilized nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe, from Asia and Egypt[93]; but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy, and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange,

Introduction of fruits, &c.

[93] It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phœnicians introduced some new arts and productions into the neighbourhood of Marseilles and Gades.

they

they contented themſelves with applying to all theſe new fruits the common denomination of apple, diſcriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer, the vine grew wild in the iſland of Sicily, and moſt probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the ſkill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taſte, of the ſavage inhabitants[94]. A thouſand years afterwards, Italy could boaſt, that of the fourſcore moſt generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her ſoil[95]. The bleſſing was ſoon communicated to the Narbonneſe province of Gaul; but ſo intenſe was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impoſſible to ripen the grapes in thoſe parts of Gaul[96]. This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquiſhed; and there is ſome reaſon to believe, that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines[97]. 3. The olive, in the weſtern world, followed the progreſs of peace, of which it was conſidered as the ſymbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were ſtrangers to that uſeful plant; it was

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The vine.

The olive.

94 See Homer Odyſſ. l. ix. v. 358.

95 Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xiv.

96 Strab. Geograph. l. iv. p. 223. The intenſe cold of a Gallic winter was almoſt proverbial among the ancients.

97 In the beginning of the ivth century, the orator Eumenius (Panegyric. Veter. viii. 6. edit. Delphin.) ſpeaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the firſt plantation of which was totally unknown. The Pagus Arebrignus is ſuppoſed by M. d'Anville to be the diſtrict of Beaune, celebrated, even at preſent, for one of the firſt growths of Burgundy.

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naturalized in thoſe countries; and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flouriſh in the neighbourhood of the ſea, were inſenſibly exploded by induſtry and experience[98]. 4. The cultivation of flax was tranſported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoveriſh the particular lands on which it was ſown[99]. 5. The uſe of artificial graſſes became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the Lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media[100]. The aſſured ſupply of wholeſome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter, multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the ſoil. To all theſe improvements may be added an aſſiduous attention to mines and fiſheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, ſerve to increaſe the pleaſures of the rich, and the ſubſiſtence of the poor. The elegant treatiſe of Columella deſcribes the advanced ſtate of the Spaniſh huſbandry, under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be obſerved, that thoſe famines, which ſo frequently afflicted the infant republic, were ſeldom or never experienced by the extenſive empire of Rome. The accidental ſcarcity, in any ſingle province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours.

Flax.

Artificial graſs.

General plenty.

[98] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xv.

[99] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xix.

[100] See the agreeable Eſſays on Agriculture by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have ſaid of lucerne.

Agri-

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Arts of luxury.

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; ſince the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the Roman empire, the labour of an induſtrious and ingenious people was variouſly, but inceſſantly employed, in the ſervice of the rich. In their dreſs, their table, their houſes, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of ſplendour, whatever could ſoothe their pride, or gratify their ſenſuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been ſeverely arraigned by the moraliſts of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happineſs, of mankind, if all poſſeſſed the neceſſaries, and none the ſuperfluities, of life. But in the preſent imperfect condition of ſociety, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, ſeems to be the only means that can correct the unequal diſtribution of property. The diligent mechanic, and the ſkilful artiſt, who have obtained no ſhare in the diviſion of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the poſſeſſors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a ſenſe of intereſt, to improve thoſe eſtates, with whoſe produce they may purchaſe additional pleaſures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every ſociety, acted with much more diffuſive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would ſoon have been exhauſted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not inſenſibly reſtored to the induſtrious ſubjects, the ſums which were exacted from them by the arms and autho-

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rity of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impreſſed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its conſequences, ſometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

Foreign trade.

But it is no eaſy taſk to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The moſt remote countries of the ancient world were ranſacked to ſupply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The foreſt of Scythia afforded ſome valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the ſhores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were aſtoniſhed at the price which they received in exchange for ſo uſeleſs a commodity [101]. There was a conſiderable demand for Babylonian carpets and other manufactures of the Eaſt: but the moſt important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the ſummer ſolſtice, a fleet of an hundred and twenty veſſels ſailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt on the Red Sea. By the periodical aſſiſtance of the Monſoons, they traverſed the ocean in about forty days. The coaſt of Malabar, or the iſland of Ceylon [102], was the uſual term of their navigation, and it was in thoſe markets that the

[101] Tacit. Germania, c. 45. Plin. Hiſt. Nat. xxxviii. 11. The latter obſerved, with ſome humour, that even faſhion had not yet found out the uſe of amber. Nero ſent a Roman knight to purchaſe great quantities on the ſpot where it was produced; the coaſt of modern Pruſſia.

[102] Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Serendib by the Arabs. It was diſcovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the Eaſt.

mer-

merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported on the backs of camels, from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire [103]. The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling: silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold [104]; precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond [105]; and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals. The labour and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expence of the Public. As the natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only instrument of commerce. It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that in the pursuit of female ornaments, the wealth of the state

Gold and silver.

[103] Plin. Hist. Natur. l. vi. Strabo, l. xvii.

[104] Hist. August. p. 224. A silk garment was considered as an ornament to a woman, but as a disgrace to a man.

[105] The two great pearl fisheries were the same as at present, Ormuz and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Jumelpur, in Bengal, which is described in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. ii. p. 281.

was

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was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hoſtile nations[106]. The annual loſs is computed, by a writer of an inquiſitive but cenſorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thouſand pounds ſterling[107]. Such was the ſtyle of diſcontent, brooding over the dark proſpect of approaching poverty. And yet if we compare the proportion between gold and ſilver as it ſtood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Conſtantine, we ſhall diſcover within that period a very conſiderable increaſe[108]. There is not the leaſt reaſon to ſuppoſe that gold was become more ſcarce; it is therefore evident that ſilver was grown more common; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhauſting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly ſupplied the demands of commerce.

General felicity.

Notwithſtanding the propenſity of mankind to exalt the paſt, and to depreciate the preſent, the tranquil and proſperous ſtate of the empire was warmly felt, and honeſtly confeſſed, by the provincials as well as Romans. "They acknowledged that the true principles of ſocial life, laws, agriculture, and ſcience, which had been firſt invented by the wiſdom of Athens, were now firmly eſtabliſhed by the power of Rome,

106 Tacit. Annal. iii. 52. In a ſpeech of Tiberius.

107 Plin. Hiſt. Natur. xii. 18. In another place he computes half that ſum; Quingenties H. S. for India excluſive of Arabia.

108 The proportion which was 1 to 10, and 12½, roſe to 14⅔, the legal regulation of Conſtantine. See Arbuthnot's Tables of ancient Coins, c. v.

"under

"under whoſe auſpicious influence the fierceſt barbarians were united by an equal government and common language. They affirm, "that with the improvement of arts, the human "ſpecies was viſibly multiplied. They celebrate the increaſing ſplendour of the cities, "the beautiful face of the country, cultivated "and adorned like an immenſe garden; and the "long feſtival of peace, which was enjoyed by "ſo many nations, forgetful of their ancient "animoſities, and delivered from the apprehenſion of future danger[109]." Whatever ſuſpicions may be ſuggeſted by the air of rhetoric and declamation, which ſeems to prevail in theſe paſſages, the ſubſtance of them is perfectly agreeable to hiſtoric truth. CHAP. II.

Decline of courage;

It was ſcarcely poſſible that the eyes of contemporaries ſhould diſcover in the public felicity the latent cauſes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a ſlow and ſecret poiſon into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the ſame level, the fire of genius was extinguiſhed, and even the military ſpirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robuſt. Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum, ſupplied the legions with excellent ſoldiers, and conſtituted the real ſtrength of the monarchy. Their perſonal valour remained, but they no longer poſſeſſed that public courage which is nouriſhed by the love of independ-

[109] Among many other paſſages, ſee Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. iii. 5.), Ariſtides (de Urbe Româ), and Tertullian (de Animâ, c. 30.).

ence,

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ence, the ſenſe of national honour, the preſence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their ſovereign, and truſted for their defence to a mercenary army. The poſterity of their boldeſt leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and ſubjects. The moſt aſpiring ſpirits reſorted to the court or ſtandard of the emperors; and the deſerted provinces, deprived of political ſtrength or union, inſenſibly ſunk into the languid indifference of private life.

of genius.

The love of letters, almoſt inſeparable from peace and refinement, was faſhionable among the ſubjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themſelves men of learning and curioſity. It was diffuſed over the whole extent of their empire; the moſt northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taſte for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were tranſcribed and ſtudied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the moſt liberal rewards ſought out the fainteſt glimmerings of literary merit [110]. The ſciences of phyſic and aſtronomy

[110] Herodes Atticus gave the ſophiſt Polemo above eight thouſand pounds for three declamations. See Philoſtrat. l. i. p. 558. The Antonines founded a ſchool at Athens, in which profeſſors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great ſects of philoſophy, were maintained at the public expence for the inſtruction of youth. The ſalary of a philoſopher was ten thouſand drachmæ, between three and four hundred pounds a year. Similar eſtabliſhments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuch. tom. ii. p. 353. edit. Reitz. Philoſtrat. l. ii. p. 565. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 21. Dion Caſſius, l. lxxi. p. 1195. Juvenal himſelf, in a morofe ſatire, which in every line betrays his own diſappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to ſay,

—— O Juvenes, circumſpicit et agitat vos,
Materiamque ſibi Ducis indulgentia quærit.

Satir. vii. 20.

were

were ſucceſsfully cultivated by the Greeks; the obſervations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are ſtudied by thoſe who have improved their diſcoveries and corrected their errors; but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence paſſed away without having produced a ſingle writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant compoſition. The authority of Plato and Ariſtotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, ſtill reigned in the ſchools; and their ſyſtems, tranſmitted with blind deference from one generation of diſciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exerciſe the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, inſtead of kindling a fire like their own, inſpired only cold and ſervile imitations: or if any ventured to deviate from thoſe models, they deviated at the ſame time from good ſenſe and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the imagination, after a long repoſe, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by an uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with thoſe bold ancients, who, by expreſſing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honour. The name of Poet was almoſt forgotten; that of Orator was uſurped by the ſophiſts. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of learning, and the decline of genius was ſoon followed by the corruption of taſte.

CHAP. II.

The

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Degeneracy.

The ſublime Longinus, who in ſomewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preſerved the ſpirit of ancient Athens, obſerves and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debaſed their ſentiments, enervated their courage, and depreſſed their talents. "In "the ſame manner," ſays he, "as ſome children "always remain pigmies, whoſe infant limbs "have been too cloſely confined; thus our ten- "der minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits "of a juſt ſervitude, are unable to expand "themſelves, or to attain that well-proportioned "greatneſs which we admire in the ancients; "who, living under a popular government, wrote "with the ſame freedom as they acted [111]." This diminutive ſtature of mankind, if we purſue the metaphor, was daily ſinking below the old ſtandard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pigmies; when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They reſtored a manly ſpirit of freedom; and after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taſte and ſcience.

[111] Longin. de Sublim. c. 43. p. 229. edit. Toll. Here too we may ſay of Longinus, "his own example ſtrengthens all his laws." Inſtead of propoſing his ſentiments with a manly boldneſs, he inſinuates them with the moſt guarded caution; puts them into the mouth of a friend, and, as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a ſhew of refuting them himſelf.

CHAP. III.

Of the Conſtitution of the Roman Empire, in the Age of the Antonines.

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THE obvious definition of a monarchy ſeems to be that of a ſtate, in which a ſingle perſon, by whatſoever name he may be diſtinguiſhed, is entruſted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But, unleſs public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of ſo formidable a magiſtrate will ſoon degenerate into deſpotiſm. The influence of the clergy, in an age of ſuperſtition, might be uſefully employed to aſſert the rights of mankind; but ſo intimate is the connexion between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very ſeldom been ſeen on the ſide of the people. A martial nobility and ſtubborn commons, poſſeſſed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into conſtitutional aſſemblies, form the only balance capable of preſerving a free conſtitution againſt enterpriſes of an aſpiring prince.

Idea of a monarchy.

Every barrier of the Roman conſtitution had been levelled by the vaſt ambition of the Dictator; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the Triumvir. After the victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, ſurnamed Cæſar, by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards

Situation of Auguſtus.

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Auguſtus, by the flattery of the ſenate. The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions[1], conſcious of their own ſtrength, and of the weakneſs of the conſtitution, habituated, during twenty years civil war, to every act of blood and violence, and paſſionately devoted to the houſe of Cæſar, from whence alone they had received, and expected, the moſt laviſh rewards. The provinces, long oppreſſed by the miniſters of the republic, ſighed for the government of a ſingle perſon, who would be the maſter, not the accomplice, of thoſe petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing, with a ſecret pleaſure, the humiliation of the ariſtocracy, demanded only bread and public ſhows; and were ſupplied with both by the liberal hand of Auguſtus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almoſt univerſally embraced the philoſophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the preſent bleſſings of eaſe and tranquillity, and ſuffered not the pleaſing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the ſenate had loſt its dignity; many of the moſt noble families were extinct. The republicans of ſpirit and ability had periſhed in the field of battle, or in the proſcription. The door of the aſſembly had been deſignedly left open, for a mixed multitude of more than a thouſand perſons, who reflected diſgrace upon their rank, inſtead of deriving honour from it[2].

[1] Oroſius, vi. 18.

[2] Julius Cæſar introduced ſoldiers, ſtrangers, and half-barbarians, into the ſenate (Sueton. in Cæſar. c. 77. 80.). The abuſe became ſtill more ſcandalous after his death.

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He reforms the ſenate.

The reformation of the ſenate was one of the firſt ſteps in which Auguſtus laid aſide the tyrant, and profeſſed himſelf the father of his country. He was elected cenſor; and, in concert with his faithful Agrippa, he examined the liſt of the ſenators, expelled a few members, whoſe vices or whoſe obſtinacy required a public example, perſuaded near two hundred to prevent the ſhame of an expulſion by a voluntary retreat, raiſed the qualification of a ſenator to about ten thouſand pounds, created a ſufficient number of Patrician families, and accepted for himſelf the honourable title of Prince of the Senate, which had always been beſtowed, by the cenſors, on the citizen the moſt eminent for his honours and ſervices[3]. But whilſt he thus reſtored the dignity, he deſtroyed the independence, of the ſenate. The principles of a free conſtitution are irrecoverably loſt, when the legiſlative power is nominated by the executive.

Reſigns his uſurped power.

Before an aſſembly thus modelled and prepared, Auguſtus pronounced a ſtudied oration, which diſplayed his patriotiſm, and diſguiſed his ambition. "He lamented, yet excuſed, his paſt "conduct. Filial piety had required at his "hands the revenge of his father's murder; the "humanity of his own nature had ſometimes "given way to the ſtern laws of neceſſity, and "to a forced connexion with two unworthy col-"leagues: as long as Antony lived, the republic

[3] Dion Caſſius, l. iii. p. 693. Suetonius in Auguſt. c. 35.

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"forbad him to abandon her to a degenerate Roman, and a barbarian queen. He was now at "liberty to satisfy his duty and his inclination. "He solemnly restored the senate and people to "all their ancient rights; and wished only to "mingle with the crowd of his fellow-citizens, "and to share the blessings which he had obtained "for his country[4]."

Is prevailed upon to resume it under the title of Emperor or General.

It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus had assisted at this assembly) to describe the various emotions of the senate; those that were suppressed, and those that were affected. It was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus; to seem to distrust it, was still more dangerous. The respective advantages of monarchy and a republic have often divided speculative inquirers; the present greatness of the Roman state, the corruption of manners, and the licence of the soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advocates of monarchy; and these general views of government were again warped by the hopes and fears of each individual. Amidst this confusion of sentiments, the answer of the senate was unanimous and decisive. They refused to accept the resignation of Augustus; they conjured him not to desert the republic which he had saved. After a decent resistance, the crafty tyrant submitted to the orders of the senate, and consented to receive the government of the provinces,

4 Dion (l. liii. p. 698.) gives us a prolix and bombast speech on this great occasion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the general language of Augustus.

and

and the general command of the Roman armies, under the well-known names of PROCONSUL and IMPERATOR [5]. But he would receive them only for ten years. Even before the expiration of that period, he hoped that the wounds of civil discord would be completely healed, and that the republic, restored to its pristine health and vigour, would no longer require the dangerous interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate. The memory of this comedy, repeated several times during the life of Augustus, was preserved to the last ages of the empire, by the peculiar pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of Rome always solemnized the tenth years of their reign [6].

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Power of the Roman generals.

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a right to command the service of the Roman youth; and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious pe-

[5] *Imperator* (from which we have derived Emperor) signified under the republic no more than *general*, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman *emperors* assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it.

[6] Dion, l. liii. p. 703, &c.

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nalties, by ſtriking the offender out of the liſt of citizens, by confiſcating his property, and by ſelling his perſon into ſlavery [7]. The moſt ſacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were ſuſpended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exerciſed an abſolute power of life and death; his juriſdiction was not confined by any forms of trial, or rules of proceeding, and the execution of the ſentence was immediate and without appeal [8]. The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legiſlative authority. The moſt important reſolutions of peace and war were ſeriouſly debated in the ſenate, and ſolemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great diſtance from Italy, the generals aſſumed the liberty of directing them againſt whatever people, and in whatever manner, they judged moſt advantageous for the public ſervice. It was from the ſucceſs, not from the juſtice, of their enterpriſes, that they expected the honours of a triumph. In the uſe of victory, eſpecially after they were no longer controlled by the commiſſioners of the ſenate, they exerciſed the moſt unbounded deſpotiſm. When Pompey commanded in the eaſt, he rewarded his ſoldiers and allies, dethroned princes,

7 Livy Epitom. l. xiv. Valer. Maxim. vi. 3.

8 See in the viiith book of Livy, the conduct of Manlius Torquatus and Papirius Curſor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they aſſerted thoſe of military diſcipline; and the people, who abhorred the action, was obliged to reſpect the principle.

divided

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divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and diſtributed the treaſures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome, he obtained, by a ſingle act of the ſenate and people, the univerſal ratification of all his proceedings [9]. Such was the power over the ſoldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or aſſumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the ſame time, the governors, or rather monarchs, of the conquered provinces, united the civil with the military character, adminiſtered juſtice as well as the finances, and exerciſed both the executive and legiſlative power of the ſtate.

Lieutenants of the emperor.

From what has been already obſerved in the firſt chapter of this work, ſome notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus intruſted to the ruling hand of Auguſtus. But as it was impoſſible that he could perſonally command the legions of ſo many diſtant frontiers, he was indulged by the ſenate, as Pompey had already been, in the permiſſion of devolving the execution of his great office on a ſufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority theſe officers ſeemed not inferior to the ancient proconſuls; but their ſtation was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commiſſions at

9 By the laviſh but unconſtrained ſuffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command ſcarcely inferior to that of Auguſtus. Among the extraordinary acts of power executed by the former, we may remark the foundation of twenty-nine cities, and the diſtribution of three or four millions ſterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with ſome oppoſition and delays in the ſenate. See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Caſſius, and the firſt book of the epiſtles to Atticus.

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the will of a ſuperior, to whoſe *auſpicious* influence the merit of their action was legally attributed [10]. They were the repreſentatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his juriſdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conqueſts of Rome. It was ſome ſatisfaction, however, to the ſenate, that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The Imperial lieutenants were of conſular or prætorian dignity; the legions were commanded by ſenators, and the præfecture of Egypt was the only important truſt committed to a Roman knight.

Diviſion of the provinces between the emperor and the ſenate.

Within ſix days after Auguſtus had been compelled to accept ſo very liberal a grant, he reſolved to gratify the pride of the ſenate by an eaſy ſacrifice. He repreſented to them, that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuſe the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers; but he muſt inſiſt on being allowed to reſtore the more peaceful and ſecure provinces, to the mild adminiſtration of the civil magiſtrate. In the diviſion of the provinces, Auguſtus provided for his own power,

[10] Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general, who was authoriſed to take the Auſpices in the name of the people. By an exact conſequence drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reſerved to the emperor; and his moſt ſucceſsful lieutenants were ſatisfied with ſome marks of diſtinction, which, under the name of triumphal honours, were invented in their favour.

and

and for the dignity of the republic. The proconſuls of the ſenate, particularly thoſe of Aſia, Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honourable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by lictors, the latter by ſoldiers. A law was paſſed, that wherever the emperor was preſent, his extraordinary commiſſion ſhould ſuperſede the ordinary juriſdiction of the governor; a cuſtom was introduced, that the new conqueſts belonged to the Imperial portion; and it was ſoon diſcovered, that the authority of the Prince, the favourite epithet of Auguſtus, was the ſame in every part of the empire.

The former preſerves his military command and guards in Rome itſelf.

In return for this imaginary conceſſion, Auguſtus obtained an important privilege, which rendered him maſter of Rome and Italy. By a dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he was authorized to preſerve his military command, ſupported by a numerous body of guards, even in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital. His command, indeed, was confined to thoſe citizens who were engaged in the ſervice by the military oath; but ſuch was the propenſity of the Romans to ſervitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magiſtrates, the ſenators, and the equeſtrian order, till the homage of flattery was inſenſibly converted into an annual and ſolemn proteſtation of fidelity.

Conſular and tribunitian powers.

Although Auguſtus conſidered a military force as the firmeſt foundation, he wiſely rejected it, as a very odious inſtrument of government. It was more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his

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policy, to reign under the venerable names of ancient magiſtracy, and artfully to collect, in his own perſon, all the ſcattered rays of civil juriſdiction. With this view, he permitted the ſenate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the conſular [11] and tribunitian offices [12], which were, in the ſame manner, continued to all his ſucceſſors. The conſuls had ſucceeded to the kings of Rome, and repreſented the dignity of the ſtate. They ſuperintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambaſſadors, and preſided in the aſſemblies both of the ſenate and people. The general control of the finances was intruſted to their care; and though they ſeldom had leiſure to adminiſter juſtice in perſon, they were conſidered as the ſupreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary juriſdiction; but whenever the ſenate empowered the firſt magiſtrate to conſult the ſafety of the commonwealth, he was raiſed by that degree above the laws, and exerciſed, in the defence of liberty, a temporary deſpotiſm [13]. The

[11] Cicero (de Legibus, iii. 3.) gives the conſular office the name of *Regia poteſtas*: and Polybius (l. vi. c. 3.) obſerves three powers in the Roman conſtitution. The monarchical was repreſented and exerciſed by the Conſuls.

[12] As the tribunitian power (diſtinct from the annual office) was firſt invented for the Dictator Cæſar (Dion, l. xliv. p. 384.), we may eaſily conceive, that it was given as a reward for having ſo nobly aſſerted, by arms, the ſacred rights of the tribunes and people. See his own Commentaries, de Bell. Civil. l. i.

[13] Auguſtus exerciſed nine annual conſulſhips without interruption. He then moſt artfully refuſed that magiſtracy, as well as the dictator-

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The character of the tribunes was, in every reſpect, different from that of the conſuls. The appearance of the former was modeſt and humble; but their perſons were ſacred and inviolable. Their force was ſuited rather for oppoſition than for action. They were inſtituted to defend the oppreſſed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it neceſſary, to ſtop, by a ſingle word, the whole machine of government. As long as the republic ſubſiſted, the dangerous influence, which either the conſul or the tribune might derive from their reſpective juriſdiction, was diminiſhed by ſeveral important reſtrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten perſons; and, as both in their private and public intereſt they were averſe to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the moſt part, to ſtrengthen rather than to deſtroy the balance of the conſtitution. But when the conſular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were veſted for life in a ſingle perſon, when the general of the army was, at the ſame time, the miniſter of the ſenate and the repreſentative of the Roman people, it was impoſſible to reſiſt the exerciſe, nor was it eaſy to define the limits, of his Imperial prerogative.

dictatorſhip, abſented himſelf from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the ſenate to inveſt him with a perpetual conſulſhip. Auguſtus, as well as his ſucceſſors, affected, however, to conceal ſo invidious a title.

To

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Imperial prerogatives.

To theſe accumulated honours, the policy of Auguſtus ſoon added the ſplendid as well as important dignities of ſupreme pontiff, and of cenſor. By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inſpection over the manners and fortunes, of the Roman people. If ſo many diſtinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaiſance of the ſenate was prepared to ſupply every deficiency by the moſt ample and extraordinary conceſſions. The emperors, as the firſt miniſters of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws: they were authorized to convoke the ſenate, to make ſeveral motions in the ſame day, to recommend candidates for the honours of the ſtate, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their diſcretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and by a moſt comprehenſive clauſe, they were empowered to execute whatſoever they ſhould judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majeſty of things private or public, human or divine [14].

The magiſtrates.

When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the *Imperial magiſtrate*, the ordinary magiſtrates of the commonwealth languiſhed in obſcurity, without vigour, and almoſt without buſineſs. The names and

14. See a fragment of a Decree of the Senate, conferring on the emperor Veſpaſian, all the powers granted to his predeceſſors, Auguſtus, Tiberius, and Claudius. This curious and important monument is publiſhed in Gruter's Inſcriptions, No. ccxlii.

forms

forms of the ancient adminiſtration were preſerved, by Auguſtus, with the moſt anxious care. The uſual number of conſuls, prætors, and tribunes [15], were annually inveſted with their reſpective enſigns of office, and continued to diſcharge ſome of their leaſt important functions. Thoſe honours ſtill attracted the vain ambition of the Romans; and the emperors themſelves, though inveſted for life with the powers of the conſulſhip, frequently aſpired to the title of that annual dignity, which they condeſcended to ſhare with the moſt illuſtrious of their fellow-citizens [16]. In the election of theſe magiſtrates, the people, during the reign of Auguſtus, were permitted to expoſe all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, inſtead of diſcovering the leaſt ſymptom of impatience, humbly ſolicited their ſuffrages for himſelf or his friends, and ſcrupuloufly practiſed all the duties

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[15] Two conſuls were created on the Calends of January; but in the courſe of the year others were ſubſtituted in their places, till the annual number ſeems to have amounted to no leſs than twelve. The prætors were uſually ſixteen or eighteen (Lipſius in Excurſ. D. ad Tacit. Annal. l. i.). I have not mentioned the Ædiles or Quæſtors. Officers of the police or revenue eaſily adapt themſelves to any form of government. In the time of Nero, the tribunes legally poſſeſſed the right of *interceſſion*, though it might be dangerous to exerciſe it (Tacit. Annal. xvi. 26.). In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneſhip was an office or a name (Plin. Epiſt. i. 23.).

[16] The tyrants themſelves were ambitious of the conſulſhip. The virtuous princes were moderate in the purſuit, and exact in the diſcharge of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and ſwore before the conſul's tribunal, that he would obſerve the laws (Plin. Panegyric. c. 64.).

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of an ordinary candidate [17]. But we may venture to aſcribe to his councils, the firſt meaſure of the ſucceeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the ſenate [18]. The aſſemblies of the people were for ever aboliſhed, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without reſtoring liberty, might have diſturbed, and perhaps endangered, the eſtabliſhed government.

The ſenate.

By declaring themſelves the protectors of the people, Marius and Cæſar had ſubverted the conſtitution of their country. But as ſoon as the ſenate had been humbled and diſarmed, ſuch an aſſembly, conſiſting of five or ſix hundred perſons, was found a much more tractable and uſeful inſtrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the ſenate, that Auguſtus and his ſucceſſors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occaſion, to adopt the language and principles of Patricians. In the adminiſtration of their own powers, they frequently conſulted the great national council, and *ſeemed* to refer to its deciſion the moſt important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces, were ſubject to the immediate juriſdiction of the ſenate. With regard to civil ob-

[17] Quoties Magiſtratuum Comitiis intereſſet. Tribus cum candidatis ſuis circuibat: ſupplicabatque more ſolemni. Ferebat et ipſe ſuffragium in tribubus, ut unus e populo. Suetonius in Auguſt. c. 56.

[18] Tum primum Comitia e campo ad patres tranſlata ſunt. Tacit. Annal. i. 15. The word *primum* ſeems to allude to ſome faint and unſucceſsful efforts, which were made towards reſtoring them to the people.

jects,

jects, it was the ſupreme court of appeal; with regard to criminal matters, a tribunal, conſtituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public ſtation, or that affected the peace and majeſty of the Roman people. The exerciſe of the judicial power became the moſt frequent and ſerious occupation of the ſenate; and the important cauſes that were pleaded before them, afforded a laſt refuge to the ſpirit of ancient eloquence. As a council of ſtate, and as a court of juſtice, the ſenate poſſeſſed very conſiderable prerogatives; but in its legiſlative capacity, in which it was ſuppoſed virtually to repreſent the people, the rights of ſovereignty were acknowledged to reſide in that aſſembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their ſanction. Their regular meetings were held on three ſtated days in every month, the Calends, the Nones, and the Ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themſelves, who gloried in the name of ſenators, ſat, voted, and divided with their equals.

To reſume, in a few words, the ſyſtem of the Imperial government; as it was inſtituted by Auguſtus, and maintained by thoſe princes who underſtood their own intereſt and that of the people, it may be defined an abſolute monarchy diſguiſed by the forms of a commonwealth. The maſters of the Roman world ſurrounded their throne with darkneſs, concealed their irreſiſtible ſtrength, and humbly profeſſed themſelves the

General idea of the Imperial ſyſtem.

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the accountable miniſters of the ſenate, whoſe ſupreme decrees they dictated and obeyed [19].

Court of the emperors.

The face of the court correſponded with the forms of the adminiſtration. The emperors, if we except thoſe tyrants whoſe capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, diſdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life, they affected to confound themſelves with their ſubjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourſe of viſits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were ſuited only to the rank of an opulent ſenator. Their family, however numerous or ſplendid, was compoſed entirely of their domeſtic ſlaves and freedmen [20]. Auguſtus or Trajan would have bluſhed at employing the meaneſt of the Romans in thoſe menial offices, which, in the houſehold and bedchamber of a limited monarch, are ſo eagerly ſolicited by the proudeſt nobles of Britain.

[19] Dion Caſſius (l. liii. p. 703—714.) has given a very looſe and partial ſketch of the Imperial ſyſtem. To illuſtrate and often to correct him, I have meditated Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and conſulted the following moderns: the Abbé de la Bleterie, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inſcriptions, tom. xix. xxi. xxiv, xxv. xxvii. Beaufort, Republique Romaine, tom. i. p. 255—275. The Diſſertations of Noodt and Gronovius, *de lege Regia*; printed at Leyden, in the year 1731. Gravina de Imperio Romano, p. 479—544. of his Opuſcula. Maffei Verona Illuſtrata, p. i. p. 245, &c.

[20] A weak prince will always be governed by his domeſtics. The power of ſlaves aggravated the ſhame of the Romans; and the ſenate paid court to a Pallas or a Narciſſus. There is a chance that a modern favourite may be a gentleman.

The

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Deification.

The deification of the emperors[21] is the only inſtance in which they departed from their accuſtomed prudence and modeſty. The Aſiatic Greeks were the firſt inventors, the ſucceſſors of Alexander the firſt objects, of this ſervile and impious mode of adulation. It was eaſily tranſferred from the kings to the governors of Aſia; and the Roman magiſtrates very frequently were adored as provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of feſtivals and ſacrifices[22]. It was natural that the emperors ſhould not refuſe what the proconſuls had accepted; and the divine honours which both the one and the other received from the provinces, atteſted rather the deſpotiſm than the ſervitude of Rome. But the conquerors ſoon imitated the vanquiſhed nations in the arts of flattery; and the imperious ſpirit of the firſt Cæſar too eaſily conſented to aſſume, during his life-time, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his ſucceſſor declined ſo dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the madneſs of Caligula and Domitian. Auguſtus permitted indeed ſome of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honour, on condition that they ſhould aſſociate the worſhip of Rome with that of the ſovereign; he tolerated private ſuper-

[21] See a treatiſe of Vandale de Conſecratione Principium. It would be eaſier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.

[22] See a diſſertation of the Abbé Mongault in the firſt volume of the Academy of Inſcriptions.

ſtition,

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ſtition, of which he might be the object[23]; but he contented himſelf with being revered by the ſenate and people in his human character, and wiſely left to his ſucceſſor, the care of his public deification. A regular cuſtom was introduced, that on the deceaſe of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the ſenate by a ſolemn decree ſhould place him in the number of the gods: and the ceremonies of his Apotheoſis were blended with thoſe of his funeral. This legal, and, as it ſhould ſeem, injudicious profanation, ſo abhorrent to our ſtricter principles, was received with a very faint murmur[24], by the eaſy nature of polytheiſm; but it was received as an inſtitution, not of religion but of policy. We ſhould diſgrace the virtues of the Antonines, by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the character of Cæſar or Auguſtus were far ſuperior to thoſe of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of ſuch a mixture of fable and myſtery, as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As ſoon as their divinity was eſtabliſhed by law, it ſunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame, or to the dignity of ſucceeding princes.

[23] Jurandaſque tuum per nomen ponimus *aras*, ſays Horace to the emperor himſelf, and Horace was well acquainted with the court of Auguſtus.

[24] See Cicero in Philippic. i. 6. Julian in Cæſaribus. Inque Deûm templis jurabit Roma per umbras, is the indignant expreſſion of Lucan, but it is a patriotic, rather than a devout indignation.

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Titles of *Auguſtus* and *Cæſar*.

In the conſideration of the Imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Auguſtus, which was not however conferred upon him till the edifice was almoſt completed. The obſcure name of Octavianus, he derived from a mean family in the little town of Aricia. It was ſtained with the blood of the proſcription; and he was deſirous, had it been poſſible, to eraſe all memory of his former life. The illuſtrious ſurname of Cæſar, he had aſſumed, as the adopted ſon of the dictator; but he had too much good ſenſe, either to hope to be confounded, or to wiſh to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was propoſed in the ſenate, to dignify their miniſter with a new appellation: and after a very ſerious diſcuſſion, that of Auguſtus was choſen, among ſeveral others, as being the moſt expreſſive of the character of peace and ſanctity, which he uniformly affected [25]. *Auguſtus* was therefore a perſonal, *Cæſar* a family diſtinction. The former ſhould naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was beſtowed; and however the latter was diffuſed by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the laſt prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inſeparably connected thoſe appellations with the Imperial dignity, and they have been preſerved by a long ſucceſſion of

[25] Dion Caſſius, l. liii. p. 710. with the curious Annotations of Reymar.

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emperors, Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans, from the fall of the republic to the preſent time. A diſtinction was, however, ſoon introduced. The ſacred title of Auguſtus was always reſerved for the monarch, whilſt the name of Cæſar was more freely communicated to his relations; and, from the reign of Hadrian at leaſt, was appropriated to the ſecond perſon in the ſtate, who was conſidered as the preſumptive heir of the empire.

Character and policy of Auguſtus.

The tender reſpect of Auguſtus for a free conſtitution which he had deſtroyed, can only be explained by an attentive conſideration of the character of that ſubtle tyrant. A cool head, an unfeeling heart, and a cowardly diſpoſition, prompted him, at the age of nineteen, to aſſume the maſk of hypocriſy, which he never afterwards laid aſide. With the ſame hand, and probably with the ſame temper, he ſigned the proſcription of Cicero, and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial; and according to the various dictates of his intereſt, he was at firſt the enemy, and at laſt the father, of the Roman world [26]. When he framed the artful ſyſtem of the Imperial authority, his moderation was inſpired by his fears. He wiſhed to

[26] As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Cæſars, his colour changed like that of the Camelion; pale at firſt, then red, afterwards black, he at laſt aſſumed the mild livery of Venus and the graces (Cæſars, p. 309.). This image, employed by Julian in his ingenious fiction, is juſt and elegant; but when he conſiders this change of character as real, and aſcribes it to the power of philoſophy, he does too much honour to philoſophy, and to Octavianus.

deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, and the armies by an image of civil government. CHAP. III.

I. The death of Cæsar was ever before his eyes. He had laviſhed wealth and honours on his adherents; but the moſt favoured friends of his uncle were in the number of the conſpirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his authority againſt open rebellion; but their vigilance could not ſecure his perſon from the dagger of a determined republican; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus [27], would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Cæsar had provoked his fate, as much by the oſtentation of his power, as by his power itſelf. The conſul or the tribune might have reigned in peace. The title of king had armed the Romans againſt his life. Auguſtus was ſenſible that mankind is governed by names; nor was he deceived in his expectation, that the ſenate and people would ſubmit to ſlavery, provided they were reſpectfully aſſured that they ſtill enjoyed their ancient freedom. A feeble ſenate and enervated people cheerfully acquieſced in the pleaſing illuſion, as long as it was ſupported by the virtue, or even by the prudence, of the ſucceſſors of Auguſtus. It was a motive of ſelf-preſervation, not a principle of liberty, that animated the conſpirators againſt Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked Image of liberty for the people.

[27] Two centuries after the eſtabliſhment of monarchy, the emperor Marcus Antoninus recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue.

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the perſon of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

Attempt of the ſenate after the death of Caligula.

There appears, indeed, *one* memorable occaſion, in which the ſenate, after ſeventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reaſſume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the conſuls convoked that aſſembly in the Capitol, condemned the memory of the Cæſars, gave the watch-word *liberty* to the few cohorts who faintly adhered to their ſtandard, and during eight-and-forty hours, acted as the independent chiefs of a free commonwealth. But while they deliberated, the Prætorian guards had reſolved. The ſtupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, inveſted with the Imperial purple, and prepared to ſupport his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end; and the ſenate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable ſervitude. Deſerted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble aſſembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the Prætorians, and to embrace the benefit of an amneſty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generoſity to obſerve[28].

Image of government for the armies.

II. The inſolence of the armies inſpired Auguſtus with fears of a ſtill more alarming nature. The deſpair of the citizens could only attempt, what the power of the ſoldiers was, at any time,

[28] It is much to be regretted that we have loſt the part of Tacitus which treated of that tranſaction. We are forced to content ourſelves with the popular rumours of Joſephus, and the imperfect hints of Dion and Suetonius.

able

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able to execute. How precarious was his own authority over men whom he had taught to violate every ſocial duty! He had heard their ſeditious clamours; he dreaded their calmer moments of reflection. One revolution had been purchaſed by immenſe rewards; but a ſecond revolution might double thoſe rewards. The troops profeſſed the fondeſt attachment to the houſe of Cæſar; but the attachments of the multitude are capricious and inconſtant. Auguſtus ſummoned to his aid, whatever remained in thoſe fierce minds of Roman prejudices; enforced the rigour of diſcipline by the ſanction of law; and, interpoſing the majeſty of the ſenate between the emperor and the army, boldly claimed their allegiance, as the firſt magiſtrate of the republic [29].

Their obedience.

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years, from the eſtabliſhment of this artful ſyſtem to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great meaſure, ſuſpended. The ſoldiers were ſeldom rouſed to that fatal ſenſe of their own ſtrength, and of the weakneſs of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of ſuch dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were aſſaſſinated in their palace by their own domeſtics: the convulſions which agitated Rome on the death of the former, were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the

[29] Auguſtus reſtored the ancient ſeverity of diſcipline. After the civil wars, he dropped the endearing name of Fellow-Soldiers, and called them only Soldiers (Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 25.). See the uſe Tiberius made of the ſenate in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions (Tacit. Annal. i.).

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whole empire in his ruin. In the ſpace of eighteen months, four princes periſhed by the ſword; and the Roman world was ſhaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this ſhort, though violent, eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Auguſtus to Commodus paſſed away unſtained with civil blood, and undiſturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by *the authority of the ſenate*, and *the conſent of the ſoldiers* [30]. The legions reſpected their oath of fidelity; and it requires a minute inſpection of the Roman annals, to diſcover three inconſiderable rebellions, which were all ſuppreſſed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle [31].

Deſignation of a ſucceſſor.

In elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and miſchief. The Roman emperors, deſirous to ſpare the legions that interval of ſuſpenſe, and the temptation of an irregular choice, inveſted their deſigned ſucceſſor with ſo large a ſhare of preſent power, as ſhould enable him, after their deceaſe, to aſſume the remainder, without ſuffering the empire to perceive the change of maſters. Thus

[30] Theſe words ſeem to have been the conſtitutional language. See Tacit. Annal. xiii. 4.

[31] The firſt was Camillus Scribonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia againſt Claudius, and was deſerted by his own troops in five days. The ſecond, L. Antonius, in Germany, who rebelled againſt Domitian; and the third, Avidius Caſſius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two laſt reigned but a few months, and were cut off by their own adherents. We may obſerve, that both Camillus and Caſſius coloured their ambition with the deſign of reſtoring the republic; a taſk, ſaid Caſſius, peculiarly reſerved for his name and family.

Auguſtus,

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Of Tiberius.

Of Titus.

Auguſtus, after all his fairer proſpects had been ſnatched from him by untimely deaths, reſted his laſt hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted ſon the cenſorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law, by which the future prince was inveſted with an authority equal to his own, over the provinces and the armies [32]. Thus Veſpaſian ſubdued the generous mind of his eldeſt ſon. Titus was adored by the eaſtern legions, which, under his command, had recently atchieved the conqueſt of Judæa. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his deſigns were ſuſpected. Inſtead of liſtening to ſuch unworthy ſuſpicions, the prudent monarch aſſociated Titus to the full powers of the Imperial dignity; and the grateful ſon ever approved himſelf the humble and faithful miniſter of ſo indulgent a father [33].

The race of the Cæſars and the Flavian family.

The good ſenſe of Veſpaſian engaged him indeed to embrace every meaſure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath, and the fidelity of the troops, had been conſecrated, by the habits of an hundred years, to the name and family of the Cæſars: and although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans ſtill revered, in the perſon of Nero, the grandſon of Germanicus, and the lineal ſucceſſor of Auguſtus. It was not without reluctance and remorſe, that the Prætorian guards had been

[32] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 20.

[33] Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Plin. in Præfat. Hiſt. Natur.

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perſuaded to abandon the cauſe of the tyrant [34]. The rapid downfal of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, taught the armies to conſider the emperors as the creatures of *their* will, and the inſtruments of *their* licence. The birth of Veſpaſian was mean; his grandfather had been a private ſoldier, his father a petty officer of the revenue [35]; his own merit had raiſed him, in an advanced age, to the empire; but his merit was rather uſeful than ſhining, and his virtues were diſgraced by a ſtrict and even ſordid parſimony. Such a prince conſulted his true intereſt by the aſſociation of a ſon, whoſe more ſplendid and amiable character might turn the public attention, from the obſcure origin, to the future glories, of the Flavian houſe. Under the mild adminiſtration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a tranſient felicity, and his beloved memory ſerved to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian.

A. D. 96. Adoption and character of Trajan.

Nerva had ſcarcely accepted the purple from the aſſaſſins of Domitian, before he diſcovered that his feeble age was unable to ſtem the torrent of public diſorders, which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predeceſſor. His mild diſpoſition was reſpected by the good; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character, whoſe juſtice ſhould ſtrike terror into the guilty. Though he had ſeveral relations, he

34 This idea is frequently and ſtrongly inculcated by Tacitus. See Hiſt. i. 5. 16. ii. 76.

35 The emperor Veſpaſian, with his uſual good ſenſe, laughed at the Genealogiſts, who deduced his family from Flavius the founder of Reate (his native country), and one of the companions of Hercules. Suet. in Veſpaſian. c. 12.

fixed

fixed his choice on a ſtranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the Lower Germany; and immediately, by a decree of the ſenate, declared him his colleague and ſucceſſor in the empire[36]. It is ſincerely to be lamented, that whilſt we are fatigued with the diſguſtful relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgment, or the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the ſuſpicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the ſenate, in pouring out the cuſtomary acclamations on the acceſſion of a new emperor, wiſhed that he might ſurpaſs the felicity of Auguſtus, and the virtue of Trajan[37]. CHAP. III. A. D. 98.

We may readily believe, that the father of his country heſitated whether he ought to intruſt the various and doubtful character of his kinſman Hadrian with ſovereign power. In his laſt moments, the arts of the empreſs Plotina either fixed the irreſolution of Trajan, or boldly ſuppoſed a fictitious adoption[38]; the truth of which could not be ſafely diſputed, and Hadrian was A. D. 117. Of Hadrian.

[36] Dion, l. lxviii. p. 1121. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric.

[37] Felicior Auguſto, MELIOR TRAJANO. Eutrop. viii. 5.

[38] Dion (l. lxix. p. 1249.) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of ſifting this myſterious tranſaction. Yet Dodwell (Prælect. Camden. xvii.) has maintained that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire during the lifetime of Trajan.

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peaceably acknowledged as his lawful ſucceſſor. Under his reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flouriſhed in peace and proſperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, aſſerted military diſcipline, and viſited all his provinces in perſon. His vaſt and active genius was equally ſuited to the moſt enlarged views, and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling paſſions of his ſoul were curioſity and vanity. As they prevailed, and as they were attracted by different objects, Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous ſophiſt, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deſerved praiſe for its equity and moderation. Yet in the firſt days of his reign, he put to death four conſular ſenators, his perſonal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tedioufneſs of a painful illneſs rendered him, at laſt, peeviſh and cruel. The ſenate doubted whether they ſhould pronounce him a god or a tyrant; and the honours decreed to his memory were granted to the prayers of the pious Antoninus [39].

Adoption of the elder and younger Verus.

The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a ſucceſſor. After revolving in his mind ſeveral men of diſtinguiſhed merit, whom he eſteemed and hated, he adopted Ælius Verus, a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the lover of Antinous [40]. But

39 Dion (lxx. p. 1171.). Aurel. Victor.

40 The deification of Antinous, his medals, ſtatues, temples, city, oracles, and conſtellation, are well known, and ſtill diſhonour the

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But while Hadrian was delighting himſelf with his own applauſe, and the acclamations of the ſoldiers, whoſe conſent had been ſecured by an immenſe donative, the new Cæſar[41] was raviſhed from his embraces, by an untimely death. He left only one ſon, Hadrian commended the boy to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was adopted by Pius; and, on the acceſſion of Marcus, was inveſted with an equal ſhare of ſovereign power. Among the many vices of this younger Verus, he poſſeſſed one virtue; a dutiful reverence for his wiſer colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire. The philoſophic emperor diſſembled his follies, lamented his early death, and caſt a decent veil over his memory.

Adoption of the two Antonines.

As ſoon as Hadrian's paſſion was either gratified or diſappointed, he reſolved to deſerve the thanks of poſterity, by placing the moſt exalted merit on the Roman throne. His diſcerning eye eaſily diſcovered a ſenator about fifty years of age, blameleſs in all the offices of life, and a youth of about ſeventeen, whoſe riper years opened the fair proſpect of every virtue: the elder of theſe was declared the ſon and ſucceſſor of Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himſelf ſhould immediately adopt the younger. The two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now ſpeaking) governed the Roman world forty-two

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the memory of Hadrian. Yet we may remark, that of the firſt fifteen emperors, Claudius was the only one whoſe taſte in love was entirely correct. For the honours of Antinous, ſee Spanheim, Commentaire ſur les Cæſars de Julien, p. 80.

[41] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 13. Aurelius Victor in Epitom.

years,

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years, with the ſame invariable ſpirit of wiſdom and virtue. Although Pius had two ſons[42], he preferred the welfare of Rome to the intereſt of his family, gave his daughter Fauſtina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the ſenate the tribunitian and proconſular powers, and with a noble diſdain, or rather ignorance of jealouſy, aſſociated him to all the labours of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his benefactor, loved him as a parent, obeyed him as his ſovereign[43], and, after he was no more, regulated his own adminiſtration by the example and maxims of his predeceſſor. Their united reigns are poſſibly the only period of hiſtory in which the happineſs of a great people was the ſole object of government.

Character and reign of Pius.

Titus Antoninus Pius has been juſtly denominated a ſecond Numa. The ſame love of religion, juſtice, and peace, was the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of both princes. But the ſituation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exerciſe of thoſe virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harveſts. Antoninus diffuſed order and tranquillity over the greateſt part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furniſhing very few materials for hiſtory; which is, indeed, little more than the

[42] Without the help of medals and inſcriptions, we ſhould be ignorant of this fact, ſo honourable to the memory of Pius.

[43] During the twenty-three years of Pius's reign, Marcus was only two nights abſent from the palace, and even thoſe were at different times. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 25.

regiſter

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regiſter of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life, he was an amiable, as well as a good man. The native ſimplicity of his virtue was a ſtranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniencies of his fortune, and the innocent pleaſures of ſociety[44]; and the benevolence of his ſoul diſplayed itſelf in a cheerful ſerenity of temper.

Of Marcus.

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of a ſeverer and more laborious kind[45]. It was the well-earned harveſt of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid ſyſtem of the Stoics, which taught him to ſubmit his body to his mind, his paſſions to his reaſon; to conſider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external, as things indifferent[46]. His

44 He was fond of the theatre, and not inſenſible to the charms of the fair ſex. Marcus Antoninus, i. 16. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 20, 21. Julian in Cæſar.

45 The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocriſy, and with a want of that ſimplicity which diſtinguiſhed Pius and even Verus (Hiſt. Auguſt. 6. 34.). This ſuſpicion, unjuſt as it was, may ſerve to account for the ſuperior applauſe beſtowed upon perſonal qualifications, in preference to the ſocial virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite; but the wildeſt ſcepticiſm never inſinuated that Cæſar might poſſibly be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valour are qualifications more eaſily aſcertained, than humanity or the love of juſtice.

46 Tacitus has characterized, in a few words, the principles of the portico: Doctores ſapientiæ ſecutus eſt, qui ſola bona quæ honeſta, mala tantum quæ turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, cæteraque extra animum, neque bonis neque malis adnumerant. Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 5.

medi-

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meditations, compoſed in the tumult of a camp, are ſtill extant; and he even condeſcended to give leſſons of philoſophy, in a more public manner than was perhaps conſiſtent with the modeſty of a ſage, or the dignity of an emperor[47]. But his life was the nobleſt commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was ſevere to himſelf, indulgent to the imperfection of others, juſt and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted that Avidius Caſſius, who excited a rebellion in Syria, had diſappointed him, by a voluntary death, of the pleaſure of converting an enemy into a friend; and he juſtified the ſincerity of that ſentiment, by moderating the zeal of the ſenate againſt the adherents of the traitor[48]. War he deteſted, as the diſgrace and calamity of human nature; but when the neceſſity of a juſt defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily expoſed his perſon to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the ſeverity of which was at laſt fatal to the weakneſs of his conſtitution. His memory was revered by a grateful poſterity, and above a century after his death, many perſons preſerved the image of Marcus Antoninus among thoſe of their houſehold gods[49].

Happineſs of the Romans.

If a man were called to fix the period in the hiſtory of the world during which the condition of the human race was moſt happy and proſper-

47 Before he went on the ſecond expedition againſt the Germans, he read lectures of philoſophy to the Roman people, during three days. He had already done the ſame in the cities of Greece and Aſia. Hiſt. Auguſt. in Caſſio, c. 3.

48 Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1190. Hiſt. Auguſt. in Avid. Caſſio.

49 Hiſt. Auguſt. in Marc. Antonin. c. 18.

ous,

ous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

Its precarious nature.

The labours of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just, but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power, which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the

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the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irreſiſtible inſtrument of oppreſſion; and the corruption of Roman manners would always ſupply flatterers eager to applaud, and miniſters prepared to ſerve, the fear or the avarice, the luſt or the cruelty, of their maſters.

Memory of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian.

Theſe gloomy apprehenſions had been already juſtified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a ſtrong and various picture of human nature, which we ſhould vainly ſeek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern hiſtory. In the conduct of thoſe monarchs we may trace the utmoſt lines of vice and virtue; the moſt exalted perfection, and the meaneſt degeneracy of our own ſpecies. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almoſt ſuperfluous to enumerate the unworthy ſucceſſors of Auguſtus. Their unparalleled vices, and the ſplendid theatre on which they were acted, have ſaved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beaſtly Vitellius[50], and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlaſting infamy.

50 Vitellius conſumed in mere eating, at leaſt ſix millions of our money in about ſeven months. It is not eaſy to expreſs his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him a hog; but it is by ſubſtituting to a coarſe word a very fine image. "At Vitel-" lius, umbraculis hortorum abditus, ut *ignava animalia*, quibus " ſi cibum ſuggeras jacent torpentque, præterita, inſtantia, futura, " pari oblivione dimiſerat. Atque illum nemore Arcino deſidem " et marcentem," &c. Tacit. Hiſt. iii. 36. ii. 95. Sueton. in Vitell. c. 13. Dion Caſſius, l. lxv. p. 1062.

During

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During fourſcore years (excepting only the ſhort and doubtful reſpite of Veſpaſian's reign[51]) Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almoſt every virtue, and every talent, that aroſe in that unhappy period.

Peculiar miſery of the Romans under their tyrants.

Under the reign of theſe monſters, the ſlavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumſtances, the one occaſioned by their former liberty, the other by their extenſive conqueſts, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From theſe cauſes were derived, 1. The exquiſite ſenſibility of the ſufferers; and, 2. The impoſſibility of eſcaping from the hand of the oppreſſor.

Inſenſibility of the Orientals.

I. When Perſia was governed by the deſcendants of Sefi, a race of princes, whoſe wanton cruelty often ſtained their divan, their table, and their bed, with the blood of their favourites, there is a ſaying recorded of a young nobleman, That he never departed from the ſultan's preſence, without ſatisfying himſelf whether his head was ſtill on his ſhoulders. The experience of every day might almoſt juſtify the ſcepticiſm of Ruſtan[52]. Yet the fatal ſword, ſuſpended above him by a ſingle thread, ſeems not to have diſturbed the ſlumbers, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Perſian. The monarch's frown, he well knew, could level him with the duſt;

[51] The execution of Helvidius Priſcus, and of the virtuous Eponina, diſgraced the reign of Veſpaſian.

[52] Voyage de Chardin en Perſe, vol. iii. p. 293.

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but the ſtroke of lightning or apoplexy might be equally fatal; and it was the part of a wiſe man, to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with the appellation of the king's ſlave; had, perhaps, been purchaſed from obſcure parents, in a country which he had never known; and was trained up from his infancy in the ſevere diſcipline of the ſeraglio [53]. His name, his wealth, his honours, were the gift of a maſter, who might, without injuſtice, reſume what he had beſtowed. Ruſtan's knowledge, if he poſſeſſed any, could only ſerve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except abſolute monarchy. The hiſtory of the eaſt informed him, that ſuch had ever been the condition of mankind [54]. The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, inculcated to him, that the ſultan was the deſcendant of the prophet, and the vicegerent of heaven; that patience was the firſt virtue of a Muſſulman, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a ſubject.

Knowledge and free ſpirit of the Romans.

The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for ſlavery. Oppreſſed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preſerved the

53 The practice of raiſing ſlaves to the great offices of ſtate is ſtill more common among the Turks than among the Perſians. The miſerable countries of Georgia and Circaſſia ſupply rulers to the greateſt part of the eaſt.

54 Chardin ſays, that European travellers have diffuſed among the Perſians ſome ideas of the freedom and mildneſs of our governments. They have done them a very ill office.

ſenti-

ſentiments, or at leaſt the ideas, of their free-born anceſtors. The education of Helvidius and Thraſea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the ſame as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philoſophy, they had imbibed the juſteſt and moſt liberal notions of the dignity of human nature, and the origin of civil ſociety. The hiſtory of their own country had taught them to revere a free, a virtuous, and a victorious commonwealth; to abhor the ſucceſsful crimes of Cæſar and Auguſtus; and inwardly to deſpiſe thoſe tyrants whom they adored with the moſt abject flattery. As magiſtrates and ſenators, they were admitted into the great council, which had once dictated laws to the earth, whoſe name ſtill gave a ſanction to the acts of the monarch, and whoſe authority was ſo often proſtituted to the vileſt purpoſes of tyranny. Tiberius, and thoſe emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to diſguiſe their murders by the formalities of juſtice; and perhaps enjoyed a ſecret pleaſure in rendering the ſenate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this aſſembly, the laſt of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accuſers aſſumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country; and the public ſervice was rewarded by riches and honours [55]. The ſervile judges profeſſed

55 They alleged the example of Scipio and Cato (Tacit. Annal. iii. 66.). Marcellus Epirus and Criſpus Vibius had acquired two millions

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feſſed to aſſert the majeſty of the commonwealth, violated in the perſon of its firſt magiſtrate[56], whoſe clemency they moſt applauded when they trembled the moſt at his inexorable and impending cruelty[57]. The tyrant beheld their baſeneſs with juſt contempt, and encountered their ſecret ſentiments of deteſtation with ſincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the ſenate.

Extent of their empire left them no place of refuge.

II. The diviſion of Europe into a number of independent ſtates, connected, however, with each other by the general reſemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the moſt beneficial conſequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who ſhould find no reſiſtance either in his own breaſt, or in his people, would ſoon experience a gentle reſtraint from the example of his equals, the dread of preſent cenſure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehenſion of his enemies. The object of his diſpleaſure, eſcaping from the narrow limits of

millions and a half under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Veſpaſian. See Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 43. Dialog. de Orator. c. 8. For one accuſation, Regulus, the juſt object of Pliny's ſatire, received from the ſenate the conſular ornaments, and a preſent of ſixty thouſand pounds.

56 The crime of *majeſty* was formerly a treaſonable offence againſt the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Auguſtus and Tiberius applied it to their own perſons, and extended it to an infinite latitude.

57 After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the ſenate for his clemency. She had not been publicly ſtrangled; nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Gemoniæ, where thoſe of common malefactors were expoſed. See Tacit. Annal. vi. 25. Sueton. in Tiberio, c. 53.

his

his dominions, would eaſily obtain, in a happier climate, a ſecure refuge, a new fortune adequate to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and perhaps the means of revenge. But the empire of the Romans filled the world, and when that empire fell into the hands of a ſingle perſon, the world became a ſafe and dreary priſon for his enemies. The ſlave of Imperial deſpotiſm, whether he was condemned to drag his gilded chain in Rome and the ſenate, or to wear out a life of exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the frozen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in ſilent deſpair [58]. To reſiſt was fatal, and it was impoſſible to fly. On every ſide he was encompaſſed with a vaſt extent of ſea and land, which he could never hope to traverſe without being diſcovered, ſeized, and reſtored to his irritated maſter. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view could diſcover nothing, except the ocean, inhoſpitable deſerts, hoſtile tribes of barbarians, of fierce manners and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchaſe the emperor's protection by the ſacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive [59]. "Wherever you are," ſaid Cicero

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[58] Seriphus was a ſmall rocky iſland in the Ægean Sea, the inhabitants of which were deſpiſed for their ignorance and obſcurity. The place of Ovid's exile is well known, by his juſt, but unmanly lamentations. It ſhould ſeem, that he only received an order to leave Rome in ſo many days, and to tranſport himſelf to Tomi. Guards and gaolers were unneceſſary.

[59] Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Parthians. He was ſtopt in the Streights of Sicily; but ſo little danger did

CHAP. III. Cicero to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that "you are equally within the power of the con- "queror[60]."

did there appear in the example, that the moſt jealous of tyrants diſdained to puniſh it. Tacit. Annal. vi. 14.

[60] Cicero ad Familiares, iv. 7.

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The Cruelty, Follies, and Murder of Commodus.—Election of Pertinax.—His Attempts to reform the State.—His Aſſaſſination by the Prætorian Guards.

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THE mildneſs of Marcus, which the rigid diſcipline of the Stoics was unable to eradicate, formed, at the ſame time, the moſt amiable, and the only defective, part of his character. His excellent underſtanding was often deceived by the unſuſpecting goodneſs of his heart. Artful men, who ſtudy the paſſions of princes, and conceal their own, approached his perſon in the diſguiſe of philoſophic ſanctity, and acquired riches and honours by affecting to deſpiſe them [1]. His exceſſive indulgence to his brother, his wife, and his ſon, exceeded the bounds of private virtue, and became a public injury, by the example and conſequences of their vices.

Indulgence of Marcus,

Fauſtina, the daughter of Pius and the wife of Marcus, had been as much celebrated for her gallantries as for her beauty. The grave ſimplicity of the philoſopher was ill calculated to engage her wanton levity, or to fix that unbounded paſſion for variety, which often diſcovered perſonal merit in the meaneſt of man-

to his wife Fauſtina;

[1] See the complaints of Avidius Caſſius, Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 45. Theſe are, it is true, the complaints of faction; but even faction exaggerates, rather than invents.

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kind[2]. The Cupid of the ancients was, in general, a very ſenſual deity; and the amours of an empreſs, as they exacted on her ſide the plaineſt advances, are ſeldom ſuſceptible of much ſentimental delicacy. Marcus was the only man in the empire who ſeemed ignorant or inſenſible of the irregularities of Fauſtina; which, according to the prejudices of every age, reflected ſome diſgrace on the injured huſband. He promoted ſeveral of her lovers to poſts of honour and profit[3], and during a connexion of thirty years, invariably gave her proofs of the moſt tender confidence, and of a reſpect which ended not with her life. In his Meditations, he thanks the gods, who had beſtowed on him a wife, ſo faithful, ſo gentle, and of ſuch a wonderful ſimplicity of manners[4]. The obſequious ſenate, at his earneſt requeſt, declared her a goddeſs. She was repreſented in her temples, with the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres; and it was decreed, that, on the day of their nuptials, the youth of either ſex ſhould pay their vows before the altar of their chaſte patroneſs[5].

[2] Fauſtinam ſatis conſtat apud Cayetam, *conditiones* ſibi et nauticas et gladiatorias, elegiſſe. *Hiſt. Auguſt.* p. 30. Lampridius explains the ſort of merit which Fauſtina choſe, and the *conditions* which ſhe exacted. *Hiſt. Auguſt.* p. 102.

[3] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 34.

[4] Meditat. l. i. The world has laughed at the credulity of Marcus; but Madam Dacier aſſures us (and we may credit a lady), that the huſband will always be deceived, if the wife condeſcends to diſſemble.

[5] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxi. p. 1195. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 33. Commentaire de Spanheim ſur les Ceſars de Julien, p. 289. The deification of Fauſtina is the only defect which Julian's criticiſm is able to diſcover in the all-accompliſhed character of Marcus.

The

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The monſtrous vices of the ſon have caſt a ſhade on the purity of the father's virtues. It has been objected to Marcus, that he ſacrificed the happineſs of millions to a fond partiality for a worthleſs boy; and that he choſe a ſucceſſor in his own family, rather than in the republic. Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he ſummoned to his aſſiſtance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices, and to render him worthy of the throne, for which he was deſigned. But the power of inſtruction is ſeldom of much efficacy, except in thoſe happy diſpoſitions where it is almoſt ſuperfluous. The diſtaſteful leſſon of a grave philoſopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whiſper of a profligate favourite; and Marcus himſelf blaſted the fruits of this laboured education, by admitting his ſon, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, to a full participation of the Imperial power. He lived but four years afterwards; but he lived long enough to repent a raſh meaſure, which raiſed the impetuous youth above the reſtraint of reaſon and authority.

to his ſon Commodus.

Moſt of the crimes which diſturb the internal peace of ſociety, are produced by the reſtraints which the neceſſary, but unequal laws of property have impoſed on the appetites of mankind, by confining to a few the poſſeſſion of thoſe objects that are coveted by many. Of all our paſſions and appetites, the love of power is of the moſt imperious and unſociable nature, ſince the pride of one man requires the ſubmiſſion of the

Acceſſion of the emperor Commodus.

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the multitude. In the tumult of civil diſcord, the laws of ſociety loſe their force, and their place is ſeldom ſupplied by thoſe of humanity. The ardor of contention, the pride of victory, the deſpair of ſucceſs, the memory of paſt injuries, and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to inflame the mind, and to ſilence the voice of pity. From ſuch motives almoſt every page of hiſtory has been ſtained with civil blood; but theſe motives will not account for the unprovoked cruelties of Commodus, who had nothing to
A. D. 180. wiſh, and every thing to enjoy. The beloved ſon of Marcus ſucceeded to his father, amidſt the acclamations of the ſenate and armies [6], and when he aſcended the throne, the happy youth ſaw round him neither competitor to remove, nor enemies to puniſh. In this calm elevated ſtation, it was ſurely natural, that he ſhould prefer the love of mankind to their deteſtation, the mild glories of his five predeceſſors, to the ignominious fate of Nero, and Domitian.

Character of Commodus.

Yet Commodus was not, as he has been repreſented, a tiger born with an inſatiate thirſt of human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of the moſt inhuman actions [7]. Nature had formed him of a weak, rather than a wicked diſpoſition. His ſimplicity and timidity rendered him the ſlave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his

6 Commodus was the firſt *Porphyrogenitus* (born ſince his father's acceſſion to the throne). By a new ſtrain of flattery, the Egyptian medals date by the years of his life; as if they were ſynonymous to thoſe of his reign. Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. ii. p. 752.

7 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 46.

mind. His cruelty, which at firſt obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling paſſion of his ſoul [8]. CHAP. IV.

He returns to Rome.

Upon the death of his father, Commodus found himſelf embarraſſed with the command of a great army, and the conduct of a difficult war againſt the Quadi and Marcomanni [9]. The ſervile and profligate youths whom Marcus had baniſhed, ſoon regained their ſtation and influence about the new emperor. They exaggerated the hardſhips and dangers of a campaign in the wild countries beyond the Danube; and they aſſured the indolent prince, that the terror of his name and the arms of his lieutenants would be ſufficient to complete the conqueſt of the diſmayed barbarians, or to impoſe ſuch conditions, as were more advantageous than any conqueſt. By a dextrous application to his ſenſual appetites, they compared the tranquillity, the ſplendour, the refined pleaſures of Rome, with the tumult of a Pannonian camp, which afforded neither leiſure nor materials for luxury [10]. Commodus liſtened to the pleaſing advice; but whilſt he heſitated between his own inclination, and the awe which he ſtill retained for his father's counſellors, the ſummer inſenſibly elapſed, and his triumphal entry into the capital was deferred till the autumn. His graceful perſon [11], popular addreſs, and imagined

[8] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxii. p. 1203.

[9] According to Tertullian (Apolog. c. 25.), he died at Sirmium. But the ſituation of Vindobona, or Vienna, where both the Victors place his death, is better adapted to the operations of the war againſt the Marcomanni and Quadi.

[10] Herodian, l. i. p. 12.

[11] Herodian, l. i. p. 16.

virtues,

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virtues, attracted the public favour; the honourable peace which he had recently granted to the barbarians, diffused an universal joy[12]; his impatience to revisit Rome was fondly ascribed to the love of his country; and his dissolute course of amusements was faintly condemned in a prince of nineteen years of age.

During the three first years of his reign, the forms, and even the spirit of the old administration were maintained by those faithful counsellors, to whom Marcus had recommended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his profligate favourites revelled in all the licence of sovereign power; but his hands were yet unstained with blood; and he had even displayed a generosity of sentiment, which might perhaps have ripened into solid virtue[13]. A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

Is wounded by an assassin, A.D. 183.

One evening, as the emperor was returning to the palace through a dark and narrow portico in the amphitheatre[14], an assassin, who waited his passage, rushed upon him with a drawn sword, loudly exclaiming, "*The senate sends you this.*" The menace prevented the deed; the assassin was seized by the guards, and immediately revealed the authors of the conspiracy. It had been formed,

[12] This universal joy is well described (from the medals as well as historians) by Mr. Wotton, Hist. of Rome, p. 192, 193.

[13] Manilius, the confidential secretary of Avidius Cassius, was discovered after he had lain concealed several years. The emperor nobly relieved the public anxiety by refusing to see him, and burning his papers without opening them. Dion Cassius, l. lxxii. p. 1209.

[14] See Maffei degli Amphitheatri, p. 126.

not in the ſtate, but within the walls of the palace. Lucilla, the emperor's ſiſter, and widow of Lucius Verus, impatient of the ſecond rank, and jealous of the reigning empreſs, had armed the murderer againſt her brother's life. She had not ventured to communicate the black deſign to her ſecond huſband Claudius Pompeianus, a ſenator of diſtinguiſhed merit and unſhaken loyalty; but among the crowd of her lovers (for ſhe imitated the manners of Fauſtina) ſhe found men of deſperate fortunes and wild ambition, who were prepared to ſerve her more violent, as well as her tender paſſions. The conſpirators experienced the rigour of juſtice, and the abandoned princeſs was puniſhed, firſt with exile, and afterwards with death [15].

Hatred and cruelty of Commodus towards the ſenate.

But the words of the aſſaſſin ſunk deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impreſſion of fear and hatred againſt the whole body of the ſenate. Thoſe whom he had dreaded as importunate miniſters, he now ſuſpected as ſecret enemies. The Delators, a race of men diſcouraged, and almoſt extinguiſhed, under the former reigns, again became formidable, as ſoon as they diſcovered that the emperor was deſirous of finding diſaffection and treaſon in the ſenate. That aſſembly, whom Marcus had ever conſidered as the great council of the nation, was compoſed of the moſt diſtinguiſhed of the Romans; and diſtinction of every kind ſoon became criminal.

[15] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1205. Herodian, l. i. p. 16. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 46.

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The poſſeſſion of wealth ſtimulated the diligence of the informers; rigid virtue implied a tacit cenſure of the irregularities of Commodus; important ſervices implied a dangerous ſuperiority of merit; and the friendſhip of the father always enſured the averſion of the ſon. Suſpicion was equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation. The execution of a conſiderable ſenator was attended with the death of all who might lament or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had once taſted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorſe.

The Quintilian brothers.

Of theſe innocent victims of tyranny, none died more lamented than the two brothers of the Quintilian family, Maximus and Condianus; whoſe fraternal love has ſaved their names from oblivion, and endeared their memory to poſterity. Their ſtudies and their occupations, their purſuits and their pleaſures, were ſtill the ſame. In the enjoyment of a great eſtate, they never admitted the idea of a ſeparate intereſt; ſome fragments are now extant of a treatiſe which they compoſed in common; and in every action of life it was obſerved, that their two bodies were animated by one ſoul. The Antonines, who valued their virtues, and delighted in their union, raiſed them, in the ſame year, to the conſulſhip; and Marcus afterwards entruſted to their joint care the civil adminiſtration of Greece, and a great military command, in which they obtained a ſignal victory over the Germans. The kind

kind cruelty of Commodus united them in death [16]. CHAP. IV.

The tyrant's rage, after having ſhed the nobleſt blood of the ſenate, at length recoiled on the principal inſtrument of his cruelty. Whilſt Commodus was immerſed in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public buſineſs on Perennis; a ſervile and ambitious miniſter, who had obtained his poſt by the murder of his predeceſſor, but who poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of vigour and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited eſtates of the nobles ſacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immenſe treaſure. The Prætorian guards were under his immediate command; and his ſon, who already diſcovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aſpired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the ſame crime, he was capable of aſpiring to it, had he not been prevented, ſurpriſed, and put to death. The fall of a miniſter is a very trifling incident in the general hiſtory of the empire; but it was haſtened by an extraordinary circumſtance, which proved how much the nerves of diſcipline were already relaxed. The legions of Britain, diſcontented with the adminiſtration of Perennis, formed a deputation of fifteen hundred ſelect men, with inſtructions to march to Rome, and lay their complaints before the emperor. Theſe military petitioners,

The miniſter Perennis.

A.D. 186.

[16] In a note upon the Auguſtan Hiſtory, Caſaubon has collected a number of particulars concerning theſe celebrated brothers. See p. 96. of his learned commentary.

by

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by their own determined behaviour, by inflaming the diviſions of the guards, by exaggerating the ſtrength of the Britiſh army, and by alarming the fears of Commodus, exacted and obtained the miniſter's death, as the only redreſs of their grievances [17]. This preſumption of a diſtant army, and their diſcovery of the weakneſs of government, was a ſure preſage of the moſt dreadful convulſions.

Revolt of Maternus.

The negligence of the public adminiſtration was betrayed ſoon afterwards, by a new diſorder, which aroſe from the ſmalleſt beginnings. A ſpirit of deſertion began to prevail among the troops; and the deſerters, inſtead of ſeeking their ſafety in flight or concealment, infeſted the highways. Maternus, a private ſoldier, of a daring boldneſs above his ſtation, collected theſe bands of robbers into a little army, ſet open the priſons, invited the ſlaves to aſſert their freedom, and plundered with impunity the rich and defenceleſs cities of Gaul and Spain. The governors of the provinces, who had long been the ſpectators, and perhaps the partners, of his depredations, were, at length, rouſed from their ſupine indolence by the threatening commands of the emperor. Maternus found that he was encompaſſed, and foreſaw that he muſt be overpowered. A great effort of deſpair was his laſt reſource. He ordered his followers to diſperſe,

[17] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1210. Herodian, l. i. p. 22. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 48. Dion gives a much leſs odious character of Perennis, than the other hiſtorians. His moderation is almoſt a pledge of his veracity.

to

to pass the Alps in small parties and various disguises, and to assemble at Rome, during the licentious tumult of the festival of Cybele [18]. To murder Commodus, and to ascend the vacant throne, was the ambition of no vulgar robber. His measures were so ably concerted, that his concealed troops already filled the streets of Rome. The envy of an accomplice discovered and ruined this singular enterprise, in the moment when it was ripe for execution [19].

The minister Cleander.

Suspicious princes often promote the last of mankind, from a vain persuasion that those who have no dependence, except on their favour, will have no attachment, except to the person of their benefactor. Cleander, the successor of Perennis, was a Phrygian by birth; of a nation, over whose stubborn, but servile temper, blows only could prevail [20]. He had been sent from his native country to Rome, in the capacity of a slave. As a slave he entered the Imperial palace, rendered himself useful to his master's passions, and rapidly ascended to the most exalted station which a subject could enjoy. His influence over the mind of Commodus was much greater than that of his predecessor; for Cleander was devoid of

[18] During the second Punic war, the Romans imported from Asia the worship of the mother of the gods. Her festival, the *Megalesia*, began on the fourth of April, and lasted six days. The streets were crowded with mad processions, the theatres with spectators, and the public tables with unbidden guests. Order and police were suspended, and pleasure was the only serious business of the city. See Ovid. de Fastis, l. iv. 189, &c.

[19] Herodian, l. i. p. 23. 28.

[20] Cicero pro Flacco, c. 27.

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His avarice and cruelty.

any ability or virtue which could inſpire the emperor with envy or diſtruſt. Avarice was the reigning paſſion of his ſoul, and the great principle of his adminiſtration. The rank of Conſul, of Patrician, of Senator, was expoſed to public ſale; and it would have been conſidered as diſaffection, if any one had refuſed to purchaſe theſe empty and diſgraceful honours with the greateſt part of his fortune [21]. In the lucrative provincial employments, the miniſter ſhared with the governor the ſpoils of the people. The execution of the laws was venal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain, not only the reverſal of the ſentence by which he was juſtly condemned, but might likewiſe inflict whatever puniſhment he pleaſed on the accuſer, the witneſſes, and the judge.

By theſe means, Cleander, in the ſpace of three years, had accumulated more wealth than had ever yet been poſſeſſed by any freedman [22]. Commodus was perfectly ſatisfied with the magnificent preſents which the artful courtier laid at his feet in the moſt ſeaſonable moments. To divert the public envy, Cleander, under the emperor's name, erected baths, porticos, and places of exerciſe, for the uſe of the people [23]. He

[21] One of theſe dear-bought promotions occaſioned a current bon mot, that Julius Solon was *baniſhed* into the ſenate.

[22] Dion (l. lxxii. p. 12, 13.) obſerves, that no freedman had poſſeſſed riches equal to thoſe of Cleander. The fortune of Pallas amounted, however, to upwards of five and twenty hundred thouſand pounds; *Ter millies*.

[23] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 12, 13. Herodian, l. i. p. 29. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 52. Theſe baths were ſituated near the *Porta Capena*. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 79.

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flattered himſelf that the Romans, dazzled and amuſed by this apparent liberality, would be leſs affected by the bloody ſcenes which were daily exhibited; that they would forget the death of Byrrhus, a ſenator to whoſe ſuperior merit the late emperor had granted one of his daughters; and that they would forgive the execution of Arius Antoninus, the laſt repreſentative of the name and virtues of the Antonines. The former, with more integrity than prudence, had attempted to diſcloſe, to his brother-in-law, the true character of Cleander. An equitable ſentence pronounced by the latter, when proconſul of Aſia, againſt a worthleſs creature of the favourite, proved fatal to him [24]. After the fall of Perennis, the terrors of Commodus had, for a ſhort time, aſſumed the appearance of a return to virtue. He repealed the moſt odious of his acts, loaded his memory with the public execration, and aſcribed to the pernicious counſels of that wicked miniſter, all the errors of his inexperienced youth. But his repentance laſted only thirty days; and, under Cleander's tyranny, the adminiſtration of Perennis was often regretted.

Sedition and death of Cleander, A. D. 189.

Peſtilence and famine contributed to fill up the meaſure of the calamities of Rome [25]. The firſt could be only imputed to the juſt indignation of the gods; but a monopoly of corn, ſupported by the riches and power of the miniſter, was con-

[24] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 48.

[25] Herodian, l. i. p. 28. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1215. The latter ſays, that two thouſand perſons died every day at Rome, during a conſiderable length of time.

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sidered as the immediate cause of the second. The popular discontent, after it had long circulated in whispers, broke out in the assembled circus. The people quitted their favourite amusements, for the more delicious pleasure of revenge, rushed in crowds towards a palace in the suburbs, one of the emperor's retirements, and demanded, with angry clamours, the head of the public enemy. Cleander, who commanded the Prætorian guards [26], ordered a body of cavalry to sally forth, and disperse the seditious multitude. The multitude fled with precipitation towards the city; several were slain, and many more were trampled to death: but when the cavalry entered the streets, their pursuit was checked by a shower of stones and darts from the roofs and windows of the houses. The foot guards [27], who had been long jealous of the prerogatives and insolence of the Prætorian cavalry, embraced the party of the people. The tumult became a regular engagement, and threatened a general massacre. The Prætorians, at length, gave way, oppressed with numbers; and the tide of popular fury re-

[26] Tuncque primum tres præfecti prætorio fuere: inter quos libertinus. From some remains of modesty, Cleander declined the title, whilst he assumed the powers, of Prætorian præfect. As the other freedmen were styled, from their several departments, *a rationibus, ab epistolis*; Cleander called himself *a pugione*, as intrusted with the defence of his master's person. Salmasius and Casaubon seem to have talked very idly upon this passage.

[27] Οἱ τῆς πόλεως πέζοι στρατιῶται. Herodian, l. i. p. 31. It is doubtful whether he means the Prætorian infantry, or the cohortes urbanæ, a body of six thousand men, but whose rank and discipline were not equal to their numbers. Neither Tillemont nor Wotton choose to decide this question.

turned

turned with redoubled violence againſt the gates of the palace, where Commodus lay, diſſolved in luxury, and alone unconſcious of the civil war. It was death to approach his perſon with the unwelcome news. He would have periſhed in this ſupine ſecurity, had not two women, his elder ſiſter Fadilla, and Marcia, the moſt favoured of his concubines, ventured to break into his preſence. Bathed in tears, and with diſhevelled hair, they threw themſelves at his feet; and with all the preſſing eloquence of fear, diſcovered to the affrighted emperor, the crimes of the miniſter, the rage of the people, and the impending ruin which, in a few minutes, would burſt over his palace and perſon. Commodus ſtarted from his dream of pleaſure, and commanded that the head of Cleander ſhould be thrown out to the people. The deſired ſpectacle inſtantly appeaſed the tumult; and the ſon of Marcus might even yet have regained the affection and confidence of his ſubjects [28].

Diſſolute pleaſures of Commodus.

But every ſentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus. Whilſt he thus abandoned the reins of empire to theſe unworthy favourites, he valued nothing in ſovereign power, except the unbounded licence of indulging his ſenſual appetites. His hours were ſpent in a ſeraglio of three hundred beautiful women, and as many boys, of every rank, and of every province; and, wherever the arts of ſeduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had

[28] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxii. p. 1215. Herodian, l. i. p. 32. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 48.

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recourſe to violence. The ancient [29] hiſtorians have expatiated on theſe abandoned ſcenes of proſtitution, which ſcorned every reſtraint of nature or modeſty; but it would not be eaſy to tranſlate their too faithful deſcriptions into the decency of modern language. The intervals of luſt were filled up with the baſeſt amuſements.

His ignorance and low ſports.

The influence of a polite age, and the labour of an attentive education, had never been able to infuſe into his rude and brutiſh mind the leaſt tincture of learning; and he was the firſt of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taſte for the pleaſures of the underſtanding. Nero himſelf excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts of muſic and poetry; nor ſhould we deſpiſe his purſuits, had he not converted the pleaſing relaxation of a leiſure hour into the ſerious buſineſs and ambition of his life. But Commodus, from his earlieſt infancy, diſcovered an averſion to whatever was rational or liberal, and a fond attachment to the amuſements of the populace; the ſports of the circus and amphitheatre, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beaſts. The maſters in every branch of learning, whom Marcus provided for his ſon, were heard with inattention and diſguſt; whilſt the Moors and Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin and to ſhoot with the bow, found a diſciple who delighted in his application, and ſoon equalled

[29] Sororibus ſuis conſtupratis. Ipſas concubinas ſuas ſub oculis ſuis ſtuprari jubebat. Nec irruentium in ſe juvenum carebat infamiâ, omni parte corporis atque ore in ſexum utrumque pollutus. Hiſt. Aug. p. 47.

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the moſt ſkilful of his inſtructors, in the ſteadineſs of the eye, and the dexterity of the hand. CHAP. IV.

The ſervile crowd, whoſe fortune depended on their maſter's vices, applauded theſe ignoble purſuits. The perfidious voice of flattery reminded him, that by exploits of the ſame nature, by the defeat of the Nemæan lion, and the ſlaughter of the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Grecian Hercules had acquired a place among the gods, and an immortal memory among men. They only forgot to obſerve, that, in the firſt ages of ſociety, when the fiercer animals often diſpute with man the poſſeſſion of an unſettled country, a ſucceſsful war againſt thoſe ſavages is one of the moſt innocent and beneficial labours of heroiſm. In the civilized ſtate of the Roman empire, the wild beaſts had long ſince retired from the face of man, and the neighbourhood of populous cities. To ſurpriſe them in their ſolitary haunts, and to tranſport them to Rome, that they might be ſlain in pomp by the hand of an emperor, was an enterpriſe equally ridiculous for the prince, and oppreſſive for the people [30]. Ignorant of theſe diſtinctions, Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious reſemblance, and ſtyled himſelf (as we Hunting of wild beaſts.

[30] The African lions, when preſſed by hunger, infeſted the open villages and cultivated country; and they infeſted them with impunity. The royal beaſt was reſerved for the pleaſures of the emperor and the capital: and the unfortunate peaſant who killed one of them, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty. This extraordinary *game-law* was mitigated by Honorius, and finally repealed by Juſtinian. Codex Theodoſ. tom. v. p. 92, et Comment. Gothofred.

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ſtill read on his medals [31]) the *Roman Hercules*. The club and the lion's hide were placed by the ſide of the throne, amongſt the enſigns of ſovereignty; and ſtatues were erected, in which Commodus was repreſented in the character, and with the attributes, of the god, whoſe valour and dexterity he endeavoured to emulate in the daily courſe of his ferocious amuſements [32].

Commodus diſplays his ſkill in the amphitheatre.

Elated with theſe praiſes, which gradually extinguiſhed the innate ſenſe of ſhame, Commodus reſolved to exhibit, before the eyes of the Roman people, thoſe exerciſes, which till then he had decently confined within the walls of his palace, and to the preſence of a few favourites. On the appointed day, the various motives of flattery, fear, and curioſity, attracted to the amphitheatre an innumerable multitude of ſpectators; and ſome degree of applauſe was deſervedly beſtowed on the uncommon ſkill of the Imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows whoſe point was ſhaped into the form of a creſcent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career, and cut aſunder the long bony neck of the oſtrich [33]. A panther was let looſe; and the archer waited till he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the ſame inſtant the ſhaft flew, the beaſt dropt dead, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the

[31] Spanheim de Numiſmat. Diſſertat. xii. tom. ii. p. 493.

[32] Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1216. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 49.

[33] The oſtrich's neck is three feet long, and compoſed of ſeventeen vertebræ. See Buffon, Hiſt. Naturelle.

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amphitheatre diſgorged at once a hundred lions; a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Commodus laid them dead as they ran raging round the *Arena*. Neither the huge bulk of the elephant, nor the ſcaly hide of the rhinoceros, could defend them from his ſtroke. Ethiopia and India yielded their moſt extraordinary productions; and ſeveral animals were ſlain in the amphitheatre, which had been ſeen only in the repreſentations of art, or perhaps of fancy[34]. In all theſe exhibitions, the ſecureſt precautions were uſed to protect the perſon of the Roman Hercules from the deſperate ſpring of any ſavage; who might poſſibly diſregard the dignity of the emperor, and the ſanctity of the god[35].

Acts as a gladiator.

But the meaneſt of the populace were affected with ſhame and indignation when they beheld their ſovereign enter the liſts as a gladiator, and glory in a profeſſion which the laws and manners of the Romans had branded with the juſteſt note of infamy[36]. He choſe the habit and arms of

34 Commodus killed a camelopardalis or Giraffe (Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1211.), the talleſt, the moſt gentle, and the moſt uſeleſs of the large quadrupeds. This ſingular animal, a native only of the interior parts of Africa, has not been ſeen in Europe ſince the revival of letters; and though M. de Buffon (Hiſt. Naturelle, tom. xiii.) has endeavoured to deſcribe, he has not ventured to delineate, the Giraffe.

35 Herodian, l. i. p. 37. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 50.

36 The virtuous and even the wiſe princes forbade the ſenators and knights to embrace this ſcandalous profeſſion, under pain of infamy, or, what was more dreaded by thoſe profligate wretches, of exile. The tyrants allured them to diſhonour by threats and rewards. Nero once produced, in the Arena, forty ſenators and ſixty knights. See Lipſius, Saturnalia, l. ii. c. 2. He has happily corrected a paſſage of Suetonius, in Nerone, c. 12.

the

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the *Secutor*, whoſe combat with the *Retiarius* formed one of the moſt lively ſcenes in the bloody ſports of the amphitheatre. The *Secutor* was armed with an helmet, ſword, and buckler; his naked antagoniſt had only a large net and a trident; with the one he endeavoured to entangle, with the other to diſpatch, his enemy. If he miſſed the firſt throw, he was obliged to fly from the purſuit of the *Secutor*, till he had prepared his net for a ſecond caſt [37]. The emperor fought in this character ſeven hundred and thirty-five ſeveral times. Theſe glorious atchievements were carefully recorded in the public acts of the empire; and that he might omit no circumſtance of infamy, he received from the common fund of gladiators, a ſtipend ſo exorbitant, that it became a new and moſt ignominious tax upon the Roman people [38]. It may be eaſily ſuppoſed, that in theſe engagements the maſter of the world was always ſucceſsful: in the amphitheatre his victories were not often ſanguinary; but when he exerciſed his ſkill in the ſchool of gladiators, or his own palace, his wretched antagoniſts were frequently honoured with a mortal wound from the hand of Commodus, and obliged to ſeal their flattery with their blood [39]. He now diſdained the appellation of Hercules. The name of Paulus, a celebrated Secutor, was the only one which

His infamy and extravagance.

37 Lipſius, l. ii. c. 7, 8. Juvenal, in the eighth ſatire, gives a picturesque deſcription of this combat.

38 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 50. Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1220. He received for each time, *decies*, about 8000 l. ſterling.

39 Victor tells us, that Commodus only allowed his antagoniſts a leaden weapon, dreading moſt probably the conſequences of their deſpair.

delighted

delighted his ear. It was inſcribed on his coloſſal ſtatues, and repeated in the redoubled acclamations [40] of the mournful and applauding ſenate [41]. Claudius Pompeianus, the virtuous huſband of Lucilla, was the only ſenator who aſſerted the honour of his rank. As a father, he permitted his ſons to conſult their ſafety by attending the amphitheatre. As a Roman, he declared, that his own life was in the emperor's hands, but that he would never behold the ſon of Marcus proſtituting his perſon and dignity. Notwithſtanding his manly reſolution, Pompeianus eſcaped the reſentment of the tyrant, and with his honour, had the good fortune to preſerve his life [42].

Commodus had now attained the ſummit of vice and infamy. Amidſt the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to diſguiſe, from himſelf, that he had deſerved the contempt and hatred of every man of ſenſe and virtue in his empire. His ferocious ſpirit was irritated by the conſciouſneſs of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the juſt apprehenſion of danger, and by the habit of ſlaughter, which he contracted in his daily amuſements. Hiſtory

40 They were obliged to repeat ſix hundred and twenty-ſix times, *Paulus firſt of the Secutors*, &c.

41 Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1221. He ſpeaks of his own baſeneſs and danger.

42 He mixed however ſome prudence with his courage, and paſſed the greateſt part of his time in a country retirement; alleging his advanced age, and the weakneſs of his eyes. "I never ſaw him in "the ſenate," ſays Dion, "except during the ſhort reign of Pertinax." All his infirmities had ſuddenly left him, and they returned as ſuddenly upon the murder of that excellent prince. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1227.

has

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Conſpiracy of his domeſtics.

has preſerved a long liſt of conſular ſenators ſacrificed to his wanton ſuſpicion, which ſought out, with peculiar anxiety, thoſe unfortunate perſons connected, however remotely, with the family of the Antonines, without ſparing even the miniſters of his crimes or pleaſures [41]. His cruelty proved at laſt fatal to himſelf. He had ſhed with impunity the nobleſt blood of Rome: he periſhed as ſoon as he was dreaded by his own domeſtics. Marcia his favourite concubine, Eclectus his chamberlain, and Lætus his Prætorian præfect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predeceſſors, reſolved to prevent the deſtruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant, or the ſudden indignation of the people. Marcia ſeized the occaſion of preſenting a draught of wine to her lover, after he had fatigued himſelf with hunting ſome wild beaſts. Commodus retired to ſleep; but whilſt he was labouring with the effects of poiſon and drunkenneſs, a robuſt youth, by profeſſion a wreſtler, entered his chamber, and ſtrangled him without reſiſtance. The body was ſecretly conveyed out of the palace, before the leaſt ſuſpicion was entertained in the city, or even in the court, of the emperor's death. Such was the fate of the ſon of Marcus, and ſo eaſy was it to deſtroy a hated tyrant, who, by the artificial powers of government, had oppreſſed, during thirteen years, ſo many millions of ſubjects,

Death of Commodus, A. D. 192. 31ſt December.

[41] The præfects were changed almoſt hourly or daily; and the caprice of Commodus was often fatal to his moſt favourite chamberlains. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 46. 51.

each

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each of whom was equal to their maſter in perſonal ſtrength and perſonal abilities [44].

Choice of Pertinax for emperor.

The meaſures of the conſpirators were conducted with the deliberate coolneſs and celerity which the greatneſs of the occaſion required. They reſolved inſtantly to fill the vacant throne with an emperor whoſe character would juſtify and maintain the action that had been committed. They fixed on Pertinax, præfect of the city, an ancient ſenator of conſular rank, whoſe conſpicuous merit had broke through the obſcurity of his birth, and raiſed him to the firſt honours of the ſtate. He had ſucceſſively governed moſt of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the firmneſs, the prudence, and the integrity of his conduct [45]. He now remained almoſt alone of the

44 Dion, l. lxxii. p. 1222. Herodian, l. i. p. 43. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 52.

45 Pertinax was a native of Alba Pompeia, in Piedmont, and ſon of a timber merchant. The order of his employments (it is marked by Capitolinus) well deſerves to be ſet down, as expreſſive of the form of government and manners of the age. 1. He was a centurion. 2. Præfect of a cohort in Syria, in the Parthian war, and in Britain. 3. He obtained an *Ala*, or ſquadron of horſe, in Mæſia. 4. He was commiſſary of proviſions on the Æmilian way. 5. He commanded the fleet upon the Rhine. 6. He was procurator of Dacia, with a ſalary of about 1600 l. a year. 7. He commanded the Veterans of a legion. 8. He obtained the rank of ſenator. 9. Of prætor. 10. With the command of the firſt legion in Rhætia and Noricum. 11. He was conſul about the year 175. 12. He attended Marcus into the eaſt. 13. He commanded an army on the Danube. 14. He was conſular legate of Mæſia. 15. Of Dacia. 16. Of Syria. 17. Of Britain. 18. He had the care of the public proviſions at

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the friends and miniſters of Marcus; and when, at a late hour of the night, he was awakened with the news that the chamberlain and the præfect were at his door, he received them with intrepid reſignation, and deſired they would execute their maſter's orders. Inſtead of death, they offered him the throne of the Roman world. During ſome moments he diſtruſted their intentions and aſſurances. Convinced at length of the death of Commodus, he accepted the purple with a ſincere reluctance, the natural effect of his knowledge both of the duties and of the dangers of the ſupreme rank[46].

He is acknowledged by the Prætorian guards;

Lætus conducted without delay his new emperor to the camp of the Prætorians, diffuſing at the ſame time through the city a ſeaſonable report that Commodus died ſuddenly of an apoplexy; and that the virtuous Pertinax had *already* ſucceeded to the throne. The guards were rather ſurpriſed than pleaſed with the ſuſpicious death of a prince, whoſe indulgence and liberality they alone had experienced; but the emergency of the occaſion, the authority of their præfect, the reputation of Pertinax, and the clamours of the people, obliged them to ſtifle their ſecret diſcontents, to accept the donative promiſed of the new emperor, to ſwear allegiance to him, and with joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands to

at Rome. 19. He was proconſul of Africa. 20. Præfect of the city. Herodian (l. i. p. 48.) does juſtice to his diſintereſted ſpirit; but Capitolinus, who collected every popular rumour, charges him with a great fortune acquired by bribery and corruption.

[46] Julian, in the Cæſars, taxes him with being acceſſary to the death of Commodus.

conduct

conduct him to the senate-house, that the military consent might be ratified by the civil authority.

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and by the senate, A.D. 193. 1st January.

This important night was now far spent; with the dawn of day, and the commencement of the new year, the senators expected a summons to attend an ignominious ceremony. In spite of all remonstrances, even of those of his creatures, who yet preserved any regard for prudence or decency, Commodus had resolved to pass the night in the gladiator's school, and from thence to take possession of the consulship, in the habit and with the attendance of that infamous crew. On a sudden, before the break of day, the senate was called together in the temple of Concord, to meet the guards, and to ratify the election of a new emperor. For a few minutes they sat in silent suspense, doubtful of their unexpected deliverance, and suspicious of the cruel artifices of Commodus; but when at length they were assured that the tyrant was no more, they resigned themselves to all the transports of joy and indignation. Pertinax, who modestly represented the meanness of his extraction, and pointed out several noble senators more deserving than himself of the empire, was constrained by their dutiful violence to ascend the throne, and received all the titles of Imperial power, confirmed by the most sincere vows of fidelity. The memory of Commodus was branded with eternal infamy. The names of tyrant, of gladiator, of public enemy, resounded in every corner of the house. They decreed in tumultuous votes, that his honours

The memory of Commodus declared infamous.

should

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ſhould be reverſed, his titles eraſed from the public monuments, his ſtatues thrown down, his body dragged with a hook into the ſtripping-room of the gladiators, to ſatiate the public fury; and they expreſſed ſome indignation againſt thoſe officious ſervants who had already preſumed to ſcreen his remains from the juſtice of the ſenate. But Pertinax could not refuſe thoſe laſt rites to the memory of Marcus, and the tears of his firſt protector Claudius Pompeianus, who lamented the cruel fate of his brother-in-law, and lamented ſtill more that he had deſerved it [47].

Legal juriſdiction of the ſenate over the emperors.

Theſe effuſions of impotent rage againſt a dead emperor, whom the ſenate had flattered when alive with the moſt abject ſervility, betrayed a juſt but ungenerous ſpirit of revenge. The legality of theſe decrees was however ſupported by the principles of the Imperial conſtitution. To cenſure, to depoſe, or to puniſh with death, the firſt magiſtrate of the republic, who had abuſed his delegated truſt, was the ancient and undoubted prerogative of the Roman ſenate [48]; but that feeble aſſembly was obliged to content itſelf with inflicting on a fallen tyrant that public juſtice, from which, during his life and reign, he had been ſhielded by the ſtrong arm of military deſpotiſm.

47 Capitolinus gives us the particulars of theſe tumultuary votes, which were moved by one ſenator, and repeated, or rather chanted, by the whole body. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 52.

48 The ſenate condemned Nero to be put to death *more majorum*, Sueton. c. 49.

Pertinax

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Virtues of Pertinax.

Pertinax found a nobler way of condemning his predeceſſor's memory; by the contraſt of his own virtues, with the vices of Commodus. On the day of his acceſſion, he reſigned over to his wife and ſon his whole private fortune; that they might have no pretence to ſolicit favours at the expence of the ſtate. He refuſed to flatter the vanity of the former with the title of Auguſta; or to corrupt the inexperienced youth of the latter by the rank of Cæſar. Accurately diſtinguiſhing between the duties of a parent and thoſe of a ſovereign, he educated his ſon with a ſevere ſimplicity, which, while it gave him no aſſured proſpect of the throne, might in time have rendered him worthy of it. In public, the behaviour of Pertinax was grave and affable. He lived with the virtuous part of the ſenate (and, in a private ſtation, he had been acquainted with the true character of each individual), without either pride or jealouſy; conſidered them as friends and companions, with whom he had ſhared the dangers of the tyranny, and with whom he wiſhed to enjoy the ſecurity of the preſent time. He very frequently invited them to familiar entertainments, the frugality of which was ridiculed by thoſe who remembered and regretted the luxurious prodigality of Commodus[49].

49 Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 1223.) ſpeaks of theſe entertainments, as a ſenator who had ſupped with the emperor. Capitolinus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 58.), like a ſlave, who had received his intelligence from one of the ſcullions.

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He endeavours to reform the ſtate.

To heal, as far as it was poſſible, the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny, was the pleaſing, but melancholy, taſk of Pertinax. The innocent victims, who yet ſurvived, were recalled from exile, releaſed from priſon, and reſtored to the full poſſeſſion of their honours and fortunes. The unburied bodies of murdered ſenators (for the cruelty of Commodus endeavoured to extend itſelf beyond death) were depoſited in the ſepulchres of their anceſtors; their memory was juſtified; and every conſolation was beſtowed on their ruined and afflicted families. Among theſe conſolations, one of the moſt grateful was the puniſhment of the delators; the common enemies of their maſter, of virtue, and of their country. Yet even in the inquiſition of theſe legal aſſaſſins, Pertinax proceeded with a ſteady temper, which gave every thing to juſtice, and nothing to popular prejudice and reſentment.

His regulations,

The finances of the ſtate demanded the moſt vigilant care of the emperor. Though every meaſure of injuſtice and extortion had been adopted, which could collect the property of the ſubject into the coffers of the prince; the rapaciouſneſs of Commodus had been ſo very inadequate to his extravagance, that, upon his death, no more than eight thouſand pounds were found in the exhauſted treaſury[50], to defray the current expences of government, and to diſcharge the preſſing demand of a liberal donative, which

50 *Decies.* The blameleſs œconomy of Pius left his ſucceſſors a treaſure of *vicies ſepties millies*, above two and twenty millions ſterling. Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1231.

the

the new emperor had been obliged to promiſe to the Prætorian guards. Yet under theſe diſtreſſed circumſtances, Pertinax had the generous firmneſs to remit all the oppreſſive taxes invented by Commodus, and to cancel all the unjuſt claims of the treaſury; declaring, in a decree of the ſenate, "that he was better ſatisfied to adminiſter "a poor republic with innocence, than to ac-"quire riches by the ways of tyranny and diſ-"honour." Oeconomy and induſtry he conſidered as the pure and genuine ſources of wealth; and from them he ſoon derived a copious ſupply for the public neceſſities. The expence of the houſehold was immediately reduced to one half. All the inſtruments of luxury, Pertinax expoſed to public auction [51], gold and ſilver plate, chariots of a ſingular conſtruction, a ſuperfluous wardrobe of ſilk and embroidery, and a great number of beautiful ſlaves of both ſexes; excepting only, with attentive humanity, thoſe who were born in a ſtate of freedom, and had been raviſhed from the arms of their weeping parents. At the ſame time that he obliged the worthleſs favourites of the tyrant to reſign a part of their ill-gotten wealth, he ſatisfied the juſt creditors of the ſtate, and unexpectedly diſcharged the long arrears of honeſt ſervices. He removed the oppreſſive reſtrictions which had been laid upon commerce, and granted all the uncultivated

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[51] Beſides the deſign of converting theſe uſeleſs ornaments into money, Dion (l. lxxiii. p. 1229.) aſſigns two ſecret motives of Pertinax. He wiſhed to expoſe the vices of Commodus, and to diſcover by the purchaſers thoſe who moſt reſembled him.

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lands in Italy and the provinces, to thoſe who would improve them; with an exemption from tribute, during the term of ten years [52].

and popularity.

Such an uniform conduct had already ſecured to Pertinax the nobleſt reward of a ſovereign, the love and eſteem of his people. Thoſe who remembered the virtues of Marcus, were happy to contemplate in their new emperor the features of that bright original; and flattered themſelves, that they ſhould long enjoy the benign influence of his adminiſtration. A haſty zeal to reform the corrupted ſtate, accompanied with leſs prudence than might have been expected from the years and experience of Pertinax, proved fatal to himſelf and to his country. His honeſt indiſcretion united againſt him the ſervile crowd, who found their private benefit in the public diſorders, and who preferred the favour of a tyrant to the inexorable equality of the laws [53].

Diſcontent of the Prætorians.

Amidſt the general joy, the ſullen and angry countenance of the Prætorian guards betrayed their inward diſſatisfaction. They had reluctantly ſubmitted to Pertinax; they dreaded the ſtrictneſs of the ancient diſcipline, which he was preparing to reſtore; and they regretted the licence of the former reign. Their diſcontents were ſecretly fomented by Lætus their præfect, who found, when it was too late, that his new emperor would reward a ſervant, but would not

[52] Though Capitolinus has picked up many idle tales of the private life of Pertinax, he joins with Dion and Herodian in admiring his public conduct.

[53] Leges, rem ſurdam, inexorabilem eſſe. T. Liv. ii. 3.

be

be ruled by a favourite. On the third day of his reign, the ſoldiers ſeized on a noble ſenator, with a deſign to carry him to the camp, and to inveſt him with the Imperial purple. Inſtead of being dazzled by the dangerous honour, the affrighted victim eſcaped from their violence, and took refuge at the feet of Pertinax. A ſhort time afterwards, Soſius Falco, one of the conſuls of the year, a raſh youth [54], but of an ancient and opulent family, liſtened to the voice of ambition; and a conſpiracy was formed during a ſhort abſence of Pertinax, which was cruſhed by his ſudden return to Rome, and his reſolute behaviour. Falco was on the point of being juſtly condemned to death as a public enemy, had he not been ſaved by the earneſt and ſincere entreaties of the injured emperor; who conjured the ſenate, that the purity of his reign might not be ſtained by the blood even of a guilty ſenator.

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A conſpiracy prevented.

Theſe diſappointments ſerved only to irritate the rage of the Prætorian guards. On the twenty-eighth of March, eighty-ſix days only after the death of Commodus, a general ſedition broke out in the camp, which the officers wanted either power or inclination to ſuppreſs. Two or three hundred of the moſt deſperate ſoldiers marched at noon-day, with arms in their hands and fury in their looks, towards the Imperial palace. The gates were thrown open by their companions

Murder of Pertinax by the Prætorians, A.D. 193. March 28th.

54 If we credit Capitolinus (which is rather difficult), Falco behaved with the moſt petulant indecency to Pertinax, on the day of his acceſſion. The wiſe emperor only admoniſhed him of his youth and inexperience. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 55.

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upon guard; and by the domeſtics of the old court, who had already formed a ſecret conſpiracy againſt the life of the too virtuous emperor. On the news of their approach, Pertinax, diſdaining either flight or concealment, advanced to meet his aſſaſſins; and recalled to their minds his own innocence, and the ſanctity of their recent oath. For a few moments they ſtood in ſilent ſuſpenſe, aſhamed of their atrocious deſign, and awed by the venerable aſpect and majeſtic firmneſs of their ſovereign, till at length the deſpair of pardon reviving their fury, a barbarian of the country of Tongres [55] levelled the firſt blow againſt Pertinax, who was inſtantly diſpatched with a multitude of wounds. His head ſeparated from his body, and placed on a lance, was carried in triumph to the Prætorian camp, in the ſight of a mournful and indignant people, who lamented the unworthy fate of that excellent prince, and the tranſient bleſſings of a reign, the memory of which could ſerve only to aggravate their approaching misfortunes [56].

55 The modern biſhopric of Liege. This ſoldier probably belonged to the Batavian horſe-guards, who were moſtly raiſed in the dutchy of Gueldres and the neighbourhood, and were diſtinguiſhed by their valour, and by the boldneſs with which they ſwam their horſes acroſs the broadeſt and moſt rapid rivers. Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 12. Dion, l. lv. p. 797. Lipſius de magnitudine Romanâ, l. i. c. 4.

56 Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1232. Herodian, l. ii. p. 60. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 58. Victor in Epitom. & in Cæſarib. Eutropius, viii. 16.

CHAP. V.

Public Sale of the Empire to Didius Julianus by the Prætorian Guards.—Clodius Albinus in Britain, Peſcennius Niger in Syria, and Septimius Severus in Pannonia, declare againſt the Murderers of Pertinax.—Civil Wars and Victory of Severus over his three Rivals.—Relaxation of Diſcipline.—New Maxims of Government.

CHAP. V.

Proportion of the military force, to the number of the people.

THE power of the ſword is more ſenſibly felt in an extenſive monarchy, than in a ſmall community. It has been calculated by the ableſt politicians, that no ſtate, without being ſoon exhauſted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleneſs. But although this relative proportion may be uniform, the influence of the army over the reſt of the ſociety will vary according to the degree of its poſitive ſtrength. The advantages of military ſcience and diſcipline cannot be exerted, unleſs a proper number of ſoldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one ſoul. With a handful of men, ſuch an union would be ineffectual; with an unwieldy hoſt, it would be impracticable; and the powers of the machine would be alike deſtroyed by the extreme minuteneſs, or the exceſſive weight, of its ſprings. To illuſtrate this obſervation, we need only reflect, that there is no ſuperiority of natural ſtrength, artificial weapons, or acquired ſkill, which could

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enable one man to keep in constant subjection one hundred of his fellow-creatures: the tyrant of a single town, or a small district, would soon discover that an hundred armed followers were a weak defence against ten thousand peasants or citizens; but an hundred thousand well-disciplined soldiers will command, with despotic sway, ten millions of subjects; and a body of ten or fifteen thousand guards will strike terror into the most numerous populace that ever crowded the streets of an immense capital.

The Prætorian guards.

The Prætorian bands, whose licentious fury was the first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman empire, scarcely amounted to the last mentioned number[1]. They derived their institution from Augustus. That crafty tyrant, sensible that laws might colour, but that arms alone could maintain, his usurped dominion, had gradually formed this powerful body of guards, in constant readiness to protect his person, to awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush the first motions of rebellion. He distinguished these favoured troops by a double pay, and superior privileges; but, as their formidable aspect would at once have alarmed and irritated the Roman people, three cohorts only were stationed in the capital; whilst the remainder was dis-

Their institution.

[1] They were originally nine or ten thousand men (for Tacitus and Dion are not agreed upon the subject), divided into as many cohorts. Vitellius increased them to sixteen thousand, and as far as we can learn from inscriptions, they never afterwards sunk much below that number. See Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ, i. 4.

persed

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perſed in the adjacent towns of Italy[2]. But after fifty years of peace and ſervitude, Tiberius ventured on a deciſive meaſure, which for ever rivetted the fetters of his country. Under the fair pretences of relieving Italy from the heavy burthen of military quarters, and of introducing a ſtricter diſcipline among the guards, he aſſembled them at Rome, in a permanent camp[3], which was fortified with ſkilful care[4], and placed on a commanding ſituation[5].

Their camp.

Such formidable ſervants are always neceſſary, but often fatal to the throne of deſpotiſm. By thus introducing the Prætorian guards as it were into the palace and the ſenate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own ſtrength, and the weakneſs of the civil government; to view the vices of their maſters with familiar contempt, and to lay aſide that reverential awe, which diſtance only, and myſtery, can preſerve, towards an imaginary power. In the luxurious idleneſs of an opulent city, their pride was nouriſhed by the ſenſe of their irreſiſtible weight; nor was it poſſible to conceal from them, that the perſon of the ſovereign, the authority of the ſenate, the public treaſure, and the ſeat of empire, were all

Their ſtrength and confidence.

2 Sueton. in Auguſt. c. 49.

3 Tacit. Annal. iv. 2. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 37. Dion Caſſius, l. lvii. p. 867.

4 In the civil war between Vitellius and Veſpaſian, the Prætorian camp was attacked and defended with all the machines uſed in the ſiege of the beſt fortified cities. Tacit. Hiſt. iii. 84.

5 Cloſe to the walls of the city, on the broad ſummit of the Quirinal and Viminal hills. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 174. Donatus de Roma Antica, p. 46.

in

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in their hands. To divert the Prætorian bands from theſe dangerous reflections, the firmeſt and beſt eſtabliſhed princes were obliged to mix blandiſhments with commands, rewards with puniſhments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleaſures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchaſe their precarious faith by a liberal donative; which, ſince the elevation of Claudius, was exacted as a legal claim, on the acceſſion of every new emperor [6].

Their ſpecious claims.

The advocates of the guards endeavoured to juſtify by arguments, the power which they aſſerted by arms; and to maintain that, according to the pureſt principles of the conſtitution, *their* conſent was eſſentially neceſſary in the appointment of an emperor. The election of conſuls, of generals, and of magiſtrates, however it had been recently uſurped by the ſenate, was the ancient and undoubted right of the Roman people [7]. But where was the Roman people to be found? Not ſurely amongſt the mixed multitude of ſlaves and ſtrangers that filled the ſtreets of Rome; a ſervile populace, as devoid of ſpirit as deſtitute of property. The defenders of the ſtate,

6 Claudius, raiſed by the ſoldiers to the empire, was the firſt who gave a donative. He gave *quina dena*, 1201. (Sueton. in Claud. c. 10.): when Marcus, with his colleague Lucius Verus, took quiet poſſeſſion of the throne, he gave *vicena*, 1601. to each of the guards. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 25. (Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1231.). We may form ſome idea of the amount of theſe ſums, by Hadrian's complaint, that the promotion of a Cæſar had coſt him *ter millies*, two millions and a half ſterling.

7 Cicero de Legibus, iii. 3. The firſt book of Livy, and the ſecond of Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, ſhew the authority of the people, even in the election of the kings.

ſelected

selected from the flower of the Italian youth [8], and trained in the exercise of arms and virtue, were the genuine representatives of the people, and the best entitled to elect the military chief of the republic. These assertions, however defective in reason, became unanswerable, when the fierce Prætorians increased their weight, by throwing, like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their swords into the scale [9].

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The Prætorians had violated the sanctity of the throne, by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonoured the majesty of it, by their subsequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, for even the præfect Lætus, who had excited the tempest, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidst the wild disorder Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor of the city, who had been sent to the camp on the first alarm of mutiny, was endeavouring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was silenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax. Though history has accustomed us to observe every principle and every passion yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition, it is scarcely credible that in these moments of horror, Sulpicianus should have aspired to ascend a throne polluted with the

They offer the empire to sale.

[8] They were originally recruited in Latium, Etruria, and the old colonies (Tacit. Annal. iv. 5.). The emperor Otho compliments their vanity, with the flattering titles of Italiæ Alumni, Romana vere juventus. Tacit. Hist. i. 84.

[9] In the siege of Rome by the Gauls. See Livy, v. 48. Plutarch. in Camill. p. 143.

recent

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recent blood of ſo near a relation, and ſo excellent a prince. He had already begun to uſe the only effectual argument, and to treat for the Imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the Prætorians, apprehenſive that, in this private contract, they ſhould not obtain a juſt price for ſo valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts; and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be diſpoſed of to the beſt bidder by public auction [10].

It is purchaſed by Julian, A.D. 193. March 28th.

This infamous offer, the moſt inſolent exceſs of military licence, diffuſed an univerſal grief, ſhame, and indignation throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy ſenator, who, regardleſs of the public calamities, was indulging himſelf in the luxury of the table [11]. His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his paraſites, eaſily convinced him that he deſerved the throne, and earneſtly conjured him to embrace ſo fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man haſtened to the Prætorian camp, where Sulpicianus was ſtill in treaty with the guards; and began to bid againſt him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negociation was tranſacted by faithful emiſſaries, who paſſed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the

[10] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1234. Herodian, l. ii. p. 63. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 60. Though the three hiſtorians agree that it was in fact an auction, Herodian alone affirms that it was proclaimed as ſuch by the ſoldiers.

[11] Spartianus ſoftens the moſt odious parts of the character and elevation of Julian.

offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promiſed a donative of five thouſand drachms (above one hundred and ſixty pounds) to each ſoldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, roſe at once to the ſum of ſix thouſand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds ſterling. The gates of the camp were inſtantly thrown open to the purchaſer; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the ſoldiers, who retained humanity enough to ſtipulate that he ſhould pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus. CHAP. V.

It was now incumbent on the Prætorians to fulfil the conditions of the ſale. They placed their new ſovereign, whom they ſerved and deſpiſed, in the centre of their ranks, ſurrounded him on every ſide with their ſhields, and conducted him in cloſe order of battle through the deſerted ſtreets of the city. The ſenate was commanded to aſſemble; and thoſe who had been the diſtinguiſhed friends of Pertinax, or the perſonal enemies of Julian, found it neceſſary to affect a more than common ſhare of ſatisfaction at this happy revolution[12]. After Julian had filled the ſenate-houſe with armed ſoldiers, he expatiated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full aſſurance of the affections of the ſenate. The obſequious aſſembly congratulated their own and the public felicity; engaged their allegiance, and conferred on him all the ſeveral branches of the Imperial Julian is acknowledged by the ſenate.

[12] Dion Caſſius, at that time prætor, had been a perſonal enemy to Julian, l. lxxii. p. 1135.

power.

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power[13]. From the ſenate Julian was conducted, by the ſame military proceſſion, to take poſſeſſion of the palace. The firſt objects that ſtruck his eyes, were the abandoned trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment, prepared for his ſupper. The one he viewed with indifference; the other with contempt. A magnificent feaſt was prepared by his order, and he amuſed himſelf till a very late hour, with dice, and the performances of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was obſerved, that after the crowd of flatterers diſperſed, and left him to darkneſs, ſolitude, and terrible reflection, he paſſed a ſleepleſs night; revolving moſt probably in his mind his own raſh folly, the fate of his virtuous predeceſſor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of an empire, which had not been acquired by merit, but purchaſed by money[14].

Takes poſſeſſion of the palace.

The public diſcontent.

He had reaſon to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himſelf without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themſelves were aſhamed of the prince whom their avarice had perſuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not conſider his elevation with horror, as the laſt inſult on the Roman name. The nobility, whoſe conſpicuous ſtation and ample poſſeſſions exacted the ſtricteſt caution, diſſembled their ſentiments, and met the affected

[13] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 61. We learn from thence one curious circumſtance, that the new emperor, whatever had been his birth, was immediately aggregated to the number of Patrician families.

[14] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 61. I have endeavoured to blend into one conſiſtent ſtory the ſeeming contradictions of the two writers.

civility of the emperor with ſmiles of complacency, and profeſſions of duty. But the people, ſecure in their numbers and obſcurity, gave a free vent to their paſſions. The ſtreets and public places of Rome reſounded with clamours and imprecations. The enraged multitude affronted the perſon of Julian, rejected his liberality, and conſcious of the impotence of their own reſentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to aſſert the violated majeſty of the Roman empire. CHAP. V.

The armies of Britain, Syria, and Pannonia, declare againſt Julian.

The public diſcontent was ſoon diffuſed from the centre to the frontiers of the empire. The armies of Britain, of Syria, and of Illyricum, lamented the death of Pertinax, in whoſe company, or under whoſe command, they had ſo often fought and conquered. They received with ſurpriſe, with indignation, and perhaps with envy, the extraordinary intelligence, that the Prætorians had diſpoſed of the empire by public auction; and they ſternly refuſed to ratify the ignominious bargain. Their immediate and unanimous revolt was fatal to Julian, but it was fatal at the ſame time to the public peace; as the generals of the reſpective armies, Clodius Albinus, Peſcennius Niger, and Septimius Severus, were ſtill more anxious to ſucceed than to revenge the murdered Pertinax. Their forces were exactly balanced. Each of them was at the head of three legions[15], with a numerous train of auxiliaries; and however different in their

[15] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1235.

charac-

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characters, they were all ſoldiers of experience and capacity.

Clodius Albinus in Britain.

Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, ſurpaſſed both his competitors in the nobility of his extraction, which he derived from ſome of the moſt illuſtrious names of the old republic[16]. But the branch from whence he claimed his deſcent, was ſunk into mean circumſtances, and tranſplanted into a remote province. It is difficult to form a juſt idea of his true character. Under the philoſophic cloak of auſterity, he ſtands accuſed of concealing moſt of the vices which degrade human nature[17]. But his accuſers are thoſe venal writers who adored the fortune of Severus, and trampled on the aſhes of an unſucceſsful rival. Virtue, or the appearances of virtue, recommended Albinus to the confidence and good opinion of Marcus; and his preſerving with the ſon the ſame intereſt which he had acquired with the father, is a proof at leaſt that he was poſſeſſed of a very flexible diſpoſition. The favour of a tyrant does not always ſuppoſe a want of merit in the object of it; he may, without intending it, reward a man of worth and ability, or he may find ſuch a man uſeful to his own ſervice. It does not appear that Albinus ſerved the ſon of Marcus, either as the miniſter of his cruelties, or even as the aſſociate of his pleaſures.

[16] The Poſthumian and the Cejonian; the former of whom was raiſed to the conſulſhip in the fifth year after its inſtitution.

[17] Spartianus, in his undigeſted collections, mixes up all the virtues and all the vices that enter into the human compoſition, and beſtows them on the ſame object. Such, indeed, are many of the characters in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

He

He was employed in a distant honourable command, when he received a confidential letter from the emperor, acquainting him of the treasonable designs of some discontented generals, and authorising him to declare himself the guardian and successor of the throne, by assuming the title and ensigns of Cæsar [18]. The governor of Britain wisely declined the dangerous honour, which would have marked him for the jealousy, or involved him in the approaching ruin, of Commodus. He courted power by nobler, or, at least, by more specious arts. On a premature report of the death of the emperor, he assembled his troops; and, in an eloquent discourse, deplored the inevitable mischiefs of despotism, described the happiness and glory which their ancestors had enjoyed under the consular government, and declared his firm resolution to reinstate the senate and people in their legal authority. This popular harangue was answered by the loud acclamations of the British legions, and received at Rome with a secret murmur of applause. Safe in the possession of this little world, and in the command of an army less distinguished indeed for discipline than for numbers and valour [19], Albinus braved the menaces of Commodus, maintained towards Pertinax a stately ambiguous reserve, and instantly declared against

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[18] Hist. August. p. 80. 84.

[19] Pertinax, who governed Britain a few years before, had been left for dead, in a mutiny of the soldiers. Hist. August. p. 54. Yet they loved and regretted him; admirantibus eam virtutem cui irascebantur.

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the uſurpation of Julian. The convulſions of the capital added new weight to his ſentiments, or rather to his profeſſions of patriotiſm. A regard to decency induced him to decline the lofty titles of Auguſtus and Emperor; and he imitated perhaps the example of Galba, who, on a ſimilar occaſion, had ſtyled himſelf the Lieutenant of the ſenate and people [20].

Peſcennius Niger in Syria.

Perſonal merit alone had raiſed Peſcennius Niger, from an obſcure birth and ſtation, to the government of Syria; a lucrative and important command, which, in times of civil confuſion, gave him a near proſpect of the throne. Yet his parts ſeem to have been better ſuited to the ſecond than to the firſt rank; he was an unequal rival, though he might have approved himſelf an excellent lieutenant, to Severus, who afterwards diſplayed the greatneſs of his mind by adopting ſeveral uſeful inſtitutions from a vanquiſhed enemy [21]. In his government, Niger acquired the eſteem of the ſoldiers, and the love of the provincials. His rigid diſcipline fortified the valour and confirmed the obedience of the former, whilſt the voluptuous Syrians were leſs delighted with the mild firmneſs of his adminiſtration, than with the affability of his manners, and the apparent pleaſure with which he attended their frequent and pompous feſtivals [22]. As ſoon as the intel-

[20] Sueton. in Galb. c. 10.

[21] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 76.

[22] Herod. l. ii. p. 68. The chronicle of John Malala, of Antioch, ſhews the zealous attachment of his countrymen to theſe feſtivals, which at once gratified their ſuperſtition, and their love of pleaſure.

ligence

ligence of the atrocious murder of Pertinax had reached Antioch, the wiſhes of Aſia invited Niger to aſſume the Imperial purple and revenge his death. The legions of the eaſtern frontier embraced his cauſe; the opulent but unarmed provinces from the frontiers of Æthiopia [23] to the Hadriatic, cheerfully ſubmitted to his power; and the kings beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates congratulated his election, and offered him their homage and ſervices. The mind of Niger was not capable of receiving this ſudden tide of fortune; he flattered himſelf that his acceſſion would be undiſturbed by competition, and unſtained by civil blood; and whilſt he enjoyed the vain pomp of triumph, he neglected to ſecure the means of victory. Inſtead of entering into an effectual negociation with the powerful armies of the weſt, whoſe reſolution might decide, or at leaſt muſt balance, the mighty conteſt; inſtead of advancing without delay towards Rome and Italy, where his preſence was impatiently expected [24], Niger trifled away, in the luxury of Antioch, thoſe irretrievable moments which were diligently improved by the deciſive activity of Severus [25].

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[23] A king of Thebes, in Egypt, is mentioned in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, as an ally, and, indeed, as a perſonal friend of Niger. If Spartianus is not, as I ſtrongly ſuſpect, miſtaken, he has brought to light a dynaſty of tributary princes totally unknown to hiſtory.

[24] Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1238. Herod. l. ii. p. 67. A verſe in every one's mouth at that time, ſeems to expreſs the general opinion of the three rivals; Optimus eſt *Niger*, bonus *Afer*, peſſimus *Albus*. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 75.

[25] Herodian, l. ii. p. 71.

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Pannonia and Dalmatia.

The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the ſpace between the Danube and the Hadriatic, was one of the laſt and moſt difficult conqueſts of the Romans. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thouſand of theſe barbarians had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Auguſtus, and exerciſed the vigilant prudence of Tiberius at the head of the collected force of the empire [26]. The Pannonians yielded at length to the arms and inſtitutions of Rome. Their recent ſubjection, however, the neighbourhood, and even the mixture, of the unconquered tribes, and perhaps the climate, adapted, as it has been obſerved, to the production of great bodies and ſlow minds [27], all contributed to preſerve ſome remains of their original ferocity, and under the tame and uniform countenance of Roman provincials, the hardy features of the natives were ſtill to be diſcerned. Their warlike youth afforded an inexhauſtible ſupply of recruits to the legions ſtationed on the banks of the Danube, and which, from a perpetual warfare againſt the Germans and Sarmatians, were deſervedly eſteemed the beſt troops in the ſervice.

Septimius Severus

The Pannonian army was at this time commanded by Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, who, in the gradual aſcent of private honours, had concealed his daring ambition, which was

[26] See an account of that memorable war in Velleius Paterculus, ii. 110, &c. who ſerved in the army of Tiberius.

[27] Such is the reflection of Herodian, l. ii. p. 74. Will the modern Auſtrians allow the influence?

never

never diverted from its ſteady courſe by the allurements of pleaſure, the appprehenſion of danger, or the feelings of humanity [28]. On the firſt news of the murder of Pertinax, he aſſembled his troops, painted in the moſt lively colours the crime, the inſolence, and the weakneſs of the Prætorian guards, and animated the legions to arms and to revenge. He concluded (and the peroration was thought extremely eloquent) with promiſing every ſoldier about four hundred pounds; an honourable donative, double in value to the infamous bribe with which Julian had purchaſed the empire [29]. The acclamations of the army immediately ſaluted Severus with the names of Auguſtus, Pertinax, and Emperor; and he thus attained the lofty ſtation to which he was invited, by conſcious merit and a long train of dreams and omens, the fruitful offspring either of his ſuperſtition or policy [30].

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declared emperor by the Pannonian legions, A. D. 193, April 13th.

The new candidate for empire ſaw and improved the peculiar advantage of his ſituation. His province extended to the Julian Alps, which

[28] In the letter to Albinus, already mentioned, Commodus accuſes Severus, as one of the ambitious generals who cenſured his conduct, and wiſhed to occupy his place. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 80.

[29] Pannonia was too poor to ſupply ſuch a ſum. It was probably promiſed in the camp, and paid at Rome, after the victory. In fixing the ſum, I have adopted the conjecture of Caſaubon. See Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 66. Comment. p. 115.

[30] Herodian, l. ii. p. 78. Severus was declared emperor on the banks of the Danube, either at Carnuntum, according to Spartianus (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 65.), or elſe at Sabaria according to Victor. Mr. Hume, in ſuppoſing that the birth and dignity of Severus were too much inferior to the Imperial crown, and that he marched in Italy as general only, has not conſidered this tranſaction with his uſual accuracy (Eſſay on the original contract).

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gave an eaſy acceſs into Italy; and he remembered the ſaying of Auguſtus, That a Pannonian army might in ten days appear in ſight of Rome [31]. By a celerity proportioned to the greatneſs of the occaſion, he might reaſonably hope to revenge Pertinax, puniſh Julian, and receive the homage of the ſenate and people, as their lawful emperor, before his competitors, ſeparated from Italy by an immenſe tract of ſea and land, were appriſed of his ſucceſs, or even of his election. During the whole expedition he ſcarcely allowed himſelf any moments for ſleep or food; marching on foot, and in complete armour, at the head of his columns, he inſinuated himſelf into the confidence and affection of his troops, preſſed their diligence, revived their ſpirits, animated their hopes, and was well ſatisfied to ſhare the hardſhips of the meaneſt ſoldier, whilſt he kept in view the infinite ſuperiority of his reward.

Marches into Italy.

Advances towards Rome.

The wretched Julian had expected, and thought himſelf prepared to diſpute the empire with the governor of Syria; but in the invincible and rapid approach of the Pannonian legions, he ſaw his inevitable ruin. The haſty arrival of every meſſenger increaſed his juſt apprehenſions. He was ſucceſſively informed, that Severus had paſſed the Alps; that the Italian cities, unwilling or unable to oppoſe his progreſs, had received him with the warmeſt profeſſions of joy and duty; that the

[31] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 3. We muſt reckon the march from the neareſt verge of Pannonia, and extend the ſight of the city as far as two hundred miles.

important

important place of Ravenna had ſurrendered without reſiſtance, and that the Hadriatic fleet was in the hands of the conqueror. The enemy was now within two hundred and fifty miles of Rome; and every moment diminiſhed the narrow ſpan of life and empire allotted to Julian. CHAP. V.

He attempted, however, to prevent, or at leaſt to protract, his ruin. He implored the venal faith of the Prætorians, filled the city with unavailing preparations for war, drew lines round the ſuburbs, and even ſtrengthened the fortifications of the palace; as if thoſe laſt intrenchments could be defended without hope of relief againſt a victorious invader. Fear and ſhame prevented the guards from deſerting his ſtandard; but they trembled at the name of the Pannonian legions, commanded by an experienced general, and accuſtomed to vanquiſh the barbarians on the frozen Danube [32]. They quitted, with a ſigh, the pleaſures of the baths and theatres, to put on arms, whoſe uſe they had almoſt forgotten, and beneath the weight of which they were oppreſſed. The unpractiſed elephants, whoſe uncouth appearance, it was hoped, would ſtrike terror into the army of the north, threw their unſkilful riders; and the awkward evolutions of the marines, drawn from the fleet of Miſenum, were an object of ridicule to the populace; whilſt the ſenate enjoyed, Diſtreſs of Julian.

[32] This is not a puerile figure of rhetoric, but an alluſion to a real fact recorded by Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1181. It probably happened more than once.

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with ſecret pleaſure, the diſtreſs and weakneſs of the uſurper [33].

His uncertain conduct.

Every motion of Julian betrayed his trembling perplexity. He inſiſted that Severus ſhould be declared a public enemy by the ſenate. He intreated that the Pannonian general might be aſſociated to the empire. He ſent public ambaſſadors of conſular rank to negociate with his rival; he diſpatched private aſſaſſins to take away his life. He deſigned that the Veſtal virgins, and all the colleges of prieſts, in their ſacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the ſacred pledges of the Roman religion, ſhould advance, in ſolemn proceſſion, to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the ſame time, he vainly tried to interrogate, or to appeaſe, the fates, by magic ceremonies, and unlawful ſacrifices [34].

Is deſerted by the Prætorians,

Severus, who dreaded neither his arms nor his enchantments, guarded himſelf from the only danger of ſecret conſpiracy, by the faithful attendance of ſix hundred choſen men, who never quitted his perſon or their cuiraſſes, either by night or by day, during the whole march. Advancing with a ſteady and rapid courſe, he paſſed, without difficulty, the defiles of the Appenine, received into his party the troops and ambaſſadors ſent to retard his progreſs, and made a ſhort halt at Interamnia, about ſeventy miles from

33 Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1233. Herodian, l. ii. p. 81. There is no ſurer proof of the military ſkill of the Romans, than their firſt ſurmounting the idle terror, and afterwards diſdaining the dangerous uſe of elephants in war.

34 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 62, 63.

Rome.

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Rome. His victory was already ſecure; but the deſpair of the Prætorians might have rendered it bloody; and Severus had the laudable ambition of aſcending the throne without drawing the ſword [35]. His emiſſaries, diſperſed in the capital, aſſured the guards, that provided they would abandon their worthleſs prince, and the perpetrators of the murder of Pertinax, to the juſtice of the conqueror, he would no longer conſider that melancholy event as the act of the whole body. The faithleſs Prætorians, whoſe reſiſtance was ſupported only by ſullen obſtinacy, gladly complied with the eaſy conditions, ſeized the greateſt part of the aſſaſſins, and ſignified to the ſenate, that they no longer defended the cauſe of Julian. That aſſembly, convoked by the conſul, unanimouſly acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor, decreed divine honours to Pertinax, and pronounced a ſentence of depoſition and death againſt his unfortunate ſucceſſor. Julian was conducted into a private apartment of the baths of the palace, and beheaded as a common criminal, after having purchaſed, with an immenſe treaſure, an anxious and precarious reign of only ſixty-ſix days [36]. The almoſt incredible expedition of Severus, who, in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, conducted a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to thoſe of the Tyber,

and condemned and executed by order of the ſenate, A. D. 193, June 2.

35 Victor and Eutropius, viii. 17. mention a combat near the Milvian bridge, the Ponte Molle, unknown to the better and more ancient writers.

36 Dion, l. lxxiii. p. 1240. Herodian, l. ii. p. 83. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 63.

proves

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proves at once the plenty of provisions produced by agriculture and commerce, the goodness of the roads, the discipline of the legions, and the indolent subdued temper of the provinces [37].

Disgrace of the Prætorian guards.

The first cares of Severus were bestowed on two measures, the one dictated by policy, the other by decency; the revenge, and the honours, due to the memory of Pertinax. Before the new emperor entered Rome, he issued his commands to the Prætorian guards, directing them to wait his arrival on a large plain near the city, without arms, but in the habits of ceremony in which they were accustomed to attend their sovereign. He was obeyed by those haughty troops, whose contrition was the effect of their just terrors. A chosen part of the Illyrian army encompassed them with levelled spears. Incapable of flight or resistance, they expected their fate in silent consternation. Severus mounted the tribunal, sternly reproached them with perfidy and cowardice, dismissed them with ignominy from the trust which they had betrayed, despoiled them of their splendid ornaments, and banished them, on pain of death, to the distance of an hundred miles from the capital. During the transaction, an-

37 From these sixty-six days, we must first deduct sixteen, as Pertinax was murdered on the 28th of March, and Severus most probably elected on the 13th of April (see Hist. August. p. 65. and Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 393. Note 7.). We cannot allow less than ten days after his election, to put a numerous army in motion. Forty days remain for this rapid march; and as we may compute about eight hundred miles from Rome to the neighbourhood of Vienna, the army of Severus marched twenty miles every day, without halt or intermission.

other

ther detachment had been ſent to ſeize their arms, occupy their camp, and prevent the haſty conſequences of their deſpair [38].

Funeral and apotheoſis of Pertinax.

The funeral and conſecration of Pertinax was next ſolemnized with every circumſtance of ſad magnificence [39]. The ſenate, with a melancholy pleaſure, performed the laſt rites to that excellent prince, whom they had loved, and ſtill regretted. The concern of his ſucceſſor was probably leſs ſincere. He eſteemed the virtues of Pertinax, but thoſe virtues would for ever have confined his ambition to a private ſtation. Severus pronounced his funeral oration with ſtudied eloquence, inward ſatisfaction, and well-acted ſorrow; and by this pious regard to his memory, convinced the credulous multitude that *he alone* was worthy to ſupply his place. Senſible, however, that arms, not ceremonies, muſt aſſert his claim to the empire, he left Rome at the end of thirty days, and without ſuffering himſelf to be elated by this eaſy victory, prepared to encounter his more formidable rivals.

Succeſs of Severus againſt Niger, and againſt Albinus.

The uncommon abilities and fortune of Severus have induced an elegant hiſtorian to compare him with the firſt and greateſt of the Cæſars [40]. The parallel is, at leaſt, imperfect. Where ſhall we find, in the character of Severus, the commanding ſuperiority of ſoul, the generous clemency, and the various genius, which could

38 Dion (l. lxxiv. p. 1241.). Herodian, l. ii. p. 84.

39 Dion (l. lxxiv. p. 1244.), who aſſiſted at the ceremony as a ſenator, gives a moſt pompous deſcription of it.

40 Herodian, l. iii. p. 112.

reconcile

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reconcile and unite the love of pleaſure, the thirſt of knowledge, and the fire of ambition[41]? In one inſtance only, they may be compared, with ſome degree of propriety, in the celerity of their motions, and their civil victories. In leſs than four years[42], Severus ſubdued the riches of the eaſt, and the valour of the weſt. He vanquiſhed two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies, provided with weapons and diſcipline equal to his own. In that age, the art of fortification, and the principles of tactics, were well underſtood by all the Roman generals; and the conſtant ſuperiority of Severus was that of an artiſt, who uſes the ſame inſtruments with more ſkill and induſtry than his rivals. I ſhall not, however, enter into a minute narrative of theſe military operations; but as the two civil wars againſt Niger and againſt Albinus, were almoſt the ſame in their conduct, event, and conſequences, I ſhall collect into one point of view, the moſt ſtriking circumſtances, tending to develope the character of the conqueror, and the ſtate of the empire.

A. D. 193—197.

Conduct of the two civil wars.

Falſehood and inſincerity, unſuitable as they ſeem to the dignity of public tranſactions, offend

[41] Though it is not, moſt aſſuredly, the intention of Lucan, to exalt the character of Cæſar, yet the idea he gives of that hero, in the tenth book of the Pharſalia, where he deſcribes him, at the ſame time, making love to Cleopatra, ſuſtaining a ſiege againſt the power of Egypt, and converſing with the ſages of the country, is, in reality, the nobleſt panegyric.

[42] Reckoning from his election, April 13, 193, to the death of Albinus, February 19, 197. See Tillemont's Chronology.

us with a leſs degrading idea of meanneſs, than when they are found in the intercourſe of private life. In the latter, they diſcover a want of courage; in the other, only a defect of power: and, as it is impoſſible for the moſt able ſtateſman to ſubdue millions of followers and enemies by their own perſonal ſtrength, the world, under the name of policy, ſeems to have granted them a very liberal indulgence of craft and diſſimulation. Yet the arts of Severus cannot be juſtified by the moſt ample privileges of ſtate reaſon. He promiſed only to betray, he flattered only to ruin; and however he might occaſionally bind himſelf by oaths and treaties, his conſcience, obſequious to his intereſt, always releaſed him from the inconvenient obligation [43].

Arts of Severus

If his two competitors, reconciled by their common danger, had advanced upon him without delay, perhaps Severus would have ſunk under their united effort. Had they even attacked him, at the ſame time, with ſeparate views and ſeparate armies, the conteſt might have been long and doubtful. But they fell, ſingly and ſucceſſively, an eaſy prey to the arts as well as arms of their ſubtle enemy, lulled into ſecurity by the moderation of his profeſſions, and overwhelmed by the rapidity of his action. He firſt marched againſt Niger, whoſe reputation and power he the moſt dreaded: but he declined any hoſtile declarations, ſuppreſſed the name of his antagoniſt, and only ſignified to the ſenate and people,

towards Niger;

[43] Herodian, l. ii. p. 85.

his

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his intention of regulating the eaſtern provinces. In private he ſpoke of Niger, his old friend and intended ſucceſſor[44], with the moſt affectionate regard, and highly applauded his generous deſign of revenging the murder of Pertinax. To puniſh the vile uſurper of the throne, was the duty of every Roman general. To perſevere in arms, and to reſiſt a lawful emperor, acknowledged by the ſenate, would alone render him criminal[45]. The ſons of Niger had fallen into his hands among the children of the provincial governors, detained at Rome as pledges for the loyalty of their parents[46]. As long as the power of Niger inſpired terror, or even reſpect, they were educated with the moſt tender care, with the children of Severus himſelf; but they were ſoon involved in their father's ruin, and removed, firſt by exile, and afterwards by death, from the eye of public compaſſion[47].

towards Albinus.

Whilſt Severus was engaged in his eaſtern war, he had reaſon to apprehend that the governor of Britain might paſs the ſea and the Alps, occupy the vacant ſeat of empire, and oppoſe his return

44 Whilſt Severus was very dangerouſly ill, it was induſtriouſly given out, that he intended to appoint Niger and Albinus his ſucceſſors. As he could not be ſincere with reſpect to both, he might not be ſo with regard to either. Yet Severus carried his hypocriſy ſo far, as to profeſs that intention in the memoirs of his own life.

45 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 65.

46 This practice, invented by Commodus, proved very uſeful to Severus. He found, at Rome, the children of many of the principal adherents of his rivals; and he employed them more than once to intimidate, or ſeduce, the parents.

47 Herodian, l. iii. p. 96. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 67, 68.

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with the authority of the ſenate and the forces of the weſt. The ambiguous conduct of Albinus, in not aſſuming the Imperial title, left room for negotiation. Forgetting, at once, his profeſſions of patriotiſm, and the jealouſy of ſovereign power, he accepted the precarious rank of Cæſar, as a reward for his fatal neutrality. Till the firſt conteſt was decided, Severus treated the man, whom he had doomed to deſtruction, with every mark of eſteem and regard. Even in the letter, in which he announced his victory over Niger, he ſtyles Albinus the brother of his ſoul and empire, ſends him the affectionate ſalutations of his wife Julia, and his young family, and intreats him to preſerve the armies and the republic faithful to their common intereſt. The meſſengers charged with this letter, were inſtructed to accoſt the Cæſar with reſpect, to deſire a private audience, and to plunge their daggers into his heart[48]. The conſpiracy was diſcovered, and the too credulous Albinus at length paſſed over to the continent, and prepared for an unequal conteſt with his rival, who ruſhed upon him at the head of a veteran and victorious army.

Event of the civil wars.

The military labours of Severus ſeem inadequate to the importance of his conqueſts. Two engagements, the one near the Helleſpont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, decided the fate of his Syrian competitor; and the troops of Europe aſſerted their uſual aſcendant over the ef-

[48] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 84. Spartianus has inſerted this curious letter at full length.

feminate

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feminate natives of Aſia[49]. The battle of Lyons, where one hundred and fifty thouſand[50] Romans were engaged, was equally fatal to Albinus. The valour of the Britiſh army maintained, indeed, a ſharp and doubtful conteſt, with the hardy diſcipline of the Illyrian legions. The fame and perſon of Severus appeared, during a few moments, irrecoverably loſt, till that warlike prince rallied his fainting troops, and led them on to a deciſive victory[51]. The war was finiſhed by that memorable day.

decided by one or two battles.

The civil wars of modern Europe have been diſtinguiſhed, not only by the fierce animoſity, but likewiſe by the obſtinate perſeverance, of the contending factions. They have generally been juſtified by ſome principle, or, at leaſt, coloured by ſome pretext, of religion, freedom, or loyalty. The leaders were nobles of independent property and hereditary influence. The troops fought like men intereſted in the deciſion of the quarrel; and as military ſpirit and party zeal were ſtrongly diffuſed throughout the whole community, a vanquiſhed chief was immediately ſupplied with new adherents, eager to ſhed their blood in the ſame cauſe. But the Romans, after the fall of the republic, combated only for the choice of maſters.

49 Conſult the third book of Herodian, and the ſeventy-fourth book of Dion Caſſius.

50 Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1260.

51 Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1261. Herodian, l. iii. p. 110. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 68. The battle was fought in the plain of Trevoux, three or four leagues from Lyons. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 406. Note 18.

Under

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Under the ſtandard of a popular candidate for empire, a few enliſted from affection, ſome from fear, many from intereſt, none from principle. The legions, uninflamed by party zeal, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives, and ſtill more liberal promiſes. A defeat, by diſabling the chief from the performance of his engagements, diſſolved the mercenary allegiance of his followers; and left them to conſult their own ſafety, by a timely deſertion of an unſucceſsful cauſe. It was of little moment to the provinces, under whoſe name they were oppreſſed or governed; they were driven by the impulſion of the preſent power, and as ſoon as that power yielded to a ſuperior force, they haſtened to implore the clemency of the conqueror, who, as he had an immenſe debt to diſcharge, was obliged to ſacrifice the moſt guilty countries to the avarice of his ſoldiers. In the vaſt extent of the Roman empire, there were few fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army; nor was there any perſon, or family, or order of men, whoſe natural intereſt, unſupported by the powers of government, was capable of reſtoring the cauſe of a ſinking party[52].

Siege of Byzantium.

Yet, in the conteſt between Niger and Severus, a ſingle city deſerves an honourable exception. As Byzantium was one of the greateſt paſſages from Europe into Aſia, it had been provided with a ſtrong garriſon, and a fleet of five

[52] Monteſquieu, Conſiderations ſur la Grandeur et la Decadence des Romains, c. xii.

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hundred veſſels was anchored in the harbour [53]. The impetuoſity of Severus diſappointed this prudent ſcheme of defence; he left to his generals the ſiege of Byzantium, forced the leſs guarded paſſage of the Helleſpont, and, impatient of a meaner enemy, preſſed forward to encounter his rival. Byzantium, attacked by a numerous and increaſing army, and afterwards by the whole naval power of the empire, ſuſtained a ſiege of three years, and remained faithful to the name and memory of Niger. The citizens and ſoldiers (we know not from what cauſe) were animated with equal fury; ſeveral of the principal officers of Niger, who deſpaired of, or who diſdained a pardon, had thrown themſelves into this laſt refuge: the fortifications were eſteemed impregnable, and, in the defence of the place, a celebrated engineer diſplayed all the mechanic powers known to the ancients [54]. Byzantium, at length, ſurrendered to famine. The magiſtrates and ſoldiers were put to the ſword, the walls demoliſhed, the privileges ſuppreſſed, and the deſtined capital of the eaſt ſubſiſted only as an open village, ſubject to the inſulting juriſdiction of Perinthus. The hiſtorian Dion, who had admired the flouriſhing, and lamented the deſolate,

[53] Moſt of theſe, as may be ſuppoſed, were ſmall open veſſels; ſome, however, were gallies of two, and a few of three ranks of oars.

[54] The engineer's name was Priſcus. His ſkill ſaved his life, and he was taken into the ſervice of the conqueror. For the particular facts of the ſiege, conſult Dion Caſſius (l. lxxv. p. 1251.), and Herodian (l. iii. p. 95.): for the theory of it, the fanciful chevalier de Folard may be looked into. See Polybe, tom. i. p. 76.

ſtate

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ſtate of Byzantium, accuſed the revenge of Severus, for depriving the Roman people of the ſtrongeſt bulwark againſt the barbarians of Pontus and Aſia [55]. The truth of this obſervation was but too well juſtified in the ſucceeding age, when the Gothic fleets covered the Euxine, and paſſed through the undefended Boſphorus into the centre of the Mediterranean.

Deaths of Niger and Albinus. Cruel conſequences of the civil wars.

Both Niger and Albinus were diſcovered and put to death in their flight from the field of battle. Their fate excited neither ſurpriſe nor compaſſion. They had ſtaked their lives againſt the chance of empire, and ſuffered what they would have inflicted; nor did Severus claim the arrogant ſuperiority of ſuffering his rivals to live in a private ſtation. But his unforgiving temper, ſtimulated by avarice, indulged a ſpirit of revenge, where there was no room for apprehenſion. The moſt conſiderable of the provincials, who, without any diſlike to the fortunate candidate, had obeyed the governor under whoſe authority they were accidentally placed, were puniſhed by death, exile, and eſpecially by the confiſcation of their eſtates. Many cities of the eaſt were ſtript of their ancient honours, and obliged to pay, into the treaſury of Severus, four times the amount of the ſums contributed by them for the ſervice of Niger [56].

55 Notwithſtanding the authority of Spartianus and ſome modern Greeks, we may be aſſured from Dion and Herodian, that Byzantium, many years after the death of Severus, lay in ruins.

56 Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1250.

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Animoſity of Severus againſt the ſenate.

Till the final deciſion of the war, the cruelty of Severus was, in ſome meaſure, reſtrained by the uncertainty of the event, and his pretended reverence for the ſenate. The head of Albinus, accompanied with a menacing letter, announced to the Romans, that he was reſolved to ſpare none of the adherents of his unfortunate competitors. He was irritated by the juſt ſuſpicion, that he had never poſſeſſed the affections of the ſenate, and he concealed his old malevolence under the recent diſcovery of ſome treaſonable correſpondences. Thirty-five ſenators, however, accuſed of having favoured the party of Albinus, he freely pardoned; and, by his ſubſequent behaviour, endeavoured to convince them, that he had forgotten, as well as forgiven, their ſuppoſed offences. But, at the ſame time, he condemned forty-one [57] other ſenators, whoſe names hiſtory has recorded; their wives, children, and clients, attended them in death, and the nobleſt provincials of Spain and Gaul were involved in the ſame ruin. Such rigid juſtice, for ſo he termed it, was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct capable of enſuring peace to the people, or ſtability to the prince; and he condeſcended ſlightly to lament, that, to be mild, it was neceſſary that he ſhould firſt be cruel [58].

57 Dion (l. lxxv. p. 1264.); only 29 ſenators are mentioned by him, but 41 are named in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 69. among whom were ſix of the name of Peſcennius. Herodian (l. iii. p. 115.) ſpeaks in general of the cruelties of Severus.

58 Aurelius Victor.

The

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The wisdom and justice of his government.

The true interest of an absolute monarch generally coincides with that of his people. Their numbers, their wealth, their order, and their security, are the best and only foundations of his real greatness; and were he totally devoid of virtue, prudence might supply its place, and would dictate the same rule of conduct. Severus considered the Roman empire as his property, and had no sooner secured the possession, than he bestowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of so valuable an acquisition. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmness, soon corrected most of the abuses with which, since the death of Marcus, every part of the government had been infected. In the administration of justice, the judgments of the emperor were characterized by attention, discernment, and impartiality; and whenever he deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and oppressed; not so much indeed from any sense of humanity, as from the natural propensity of a despot, to humble the pride of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the same common level of absolute dependence. His expensive taste for building, magnificent shows, and above all a constant and liberal distribution of corn and provisions, were the surest means of captivating the affection of the Roman people [59].

The

59 Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1272. Hist. August. p. 67. Severus celebrated the secular games with extraordinary magnificence, and he left in the public granaries a provision of corn for seven years, at the rate of 75,000 modii, or about 2500 quarters per day. I am

 persuaded,

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General peace and prosperity.

The misfortunes of civil discord were obliterated. The calm of peace and prosperity was once more experienced in the provinces; and many cities, restored by the munificence of Severus, assumed the title of his colonies, and attested by public monuments their gratitude and felicity [60]. The fame of the Roman arms was revived by that warlike and successful emperor [61], and he boasted with a just pride, that having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal, and honourable peace [62].

Relaxation of military discipline.

Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely healed, its mortal poison still lurked in the vitals of the constitution. Severus possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability; but the daring soul of the first Cæsar, or the deep policy of Augustus, were scarcely equal to the task of curbing the insolence of the victorious legions. By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of discipline [63]. The vanity of his

persuaded, that the granaries of Severus were supplied for a long term: but I am not less persuaded, that policy on one hand, and admiration on the other, magnified the hoard far beyond its true contents.

60 See Spanheim's treatise of ancient medals, the inscriptions, and our learned travellers Spon and Wheeler, Shaw, Pocock, &c. who, in Africa, Greece, and Asia, have found more monuments of Severus, than of any other Roman emperor whatsoever.

61 He carried his victorious arms to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the capitals of the Parthian monarchy. I shall have occasion to mention this war in its proper place.

62 *Etiam in Britannis*, was his own just and emphatic expression. Hist. August. 73.

63 Herodian, l. iii. p. 115. Hist. August. p. 68.

soldiers

ſoldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their eaſe was indulged in the permiſſion of living with their wives in the idleneſs of quarters. He increaſed their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and ſoon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occaſion of danger or feſtivity. Elated by ſucceſs, enervated by luxury, and raiſed above the level of ſubjects by their dangerous privileges [64], they ſoon became incapable of military fatigue, oppreſſive to the country, and impatient of a juſt ſubordination. Their officers aſſerted the ſuperiority of rank by a more profuſe and elegant luxury. There is ſtill extant a letter of Severus, lamenting the licentious ſtate of the army, and exhorting one of his generals to begin the neceſſary reformation from the tribunes themſelves; ſince, as he juſtly obſerves, the officer who has forfeited the eſteem, will never command the obedience, of his ſoldiers [65]. Had the emperor purſued the train of reflection, he would have diſcovered, that the primary cauſe of this general corruption, might be aſcribed, not indeed to the example, but to the pernicious indulgence, however, of the commander in chief.

New eſtabliſhment of the Prætorian guards.

The Prætorians, who murdered their emperor and ſold the empire, had received the juſt puniſhment of their treaſon; but the neceſſary,

64 Upon the inſolence and privileges of the ſoldiers, the 16th ſatire, falſely aſcribed to Juvenal, may be conſulted; the ſtyle and circumſtances of it would induce me to believe, that it was compoſed under the reign of Severus, or that of his ſon.

65 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 73.

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though dangerous, inſtitution of guards, was ſoon reſtored on a new model by Severus, and increaſed to four times the ancient number[66]. Formerly theſe troops had been recruited in Italy; and as the adjacent provinces gradually imbibed the ſofter manners of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain. In the room of theſe elegant troops, better adapted to the pomp of courts than to the uſes of war, it was eſtabliſhed by Severus, that from all the legions of the frontiers, the ſoldiers moſt diſtinguiſhed for ſtrength, valour and fidelity, ſhould be occaſionally draughted; and promoted, as an honour and reward, into the more eligible ſervice of the guards[67]. By this new inſtitution, the Italian youth were diverted from the exerciſe of arms, and the capital was terrified by the ſtrange aſpect and manners of a multitude of barbarians. But Severus flattered himſelf, that the legions would conſider theſe choſen Prætorians as the repreſentatives of the whole military order; and that the preſent aid of fifty thouſand men, ſuperior in arms and appointments to any force that could be brought into the field againſt them, would for ever cruſh the hopes of rebellion, and ſecure the empire to himſelf and his poſterity.

The office of Prætorian Præfect.

The command of theſe favoured and formidable troops ſoon became the firſt office of the empire. As the government degenerated into military deſpotiſm, the Prætorian Præfect, who

[66] Herodian, l. iii. p. 131.

[67] Dion, l. lxxiv. p. 1243.

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in his origin had been a ſimple captain of the guards, was placed, not only at the head of the army, but of the finances, and even of the law. In every department of adminiſtration, he repreſented the perſon, and exerciſed the authority, of the emperor. The firſt Præfect who enjoyed and abuſed this immenſe power was Plautianus, the favourite miniſter of Severus. His reign laſted above ten years, till the marriage of his daughter with the eldeſt ſon of the emperor, which ſeemed to aſſure his fortune, proved the occaſion of his ruin[68]. The animoſities of the palace, by irritating the ambition and alarming the fears of Plautianus, threatened to produce a revolution, and obliged the emperor, who ſtill loved him, to conſent with reluctance to his death[69]. After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer, the celebrated Papinian, was appointed to execute the motley office of Prætorian Præfect.

The ſenate oppreſſed by military deſpotiſm.

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue and even the good ſenſe of the emperors had been diſtinguiſhed by their zeal or affected reverence for the ſenate, and by a tender regard to the nice frame of civil policy inſtituted by Auguſtus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years ſpent in

[68] One of his moſt daring and wanton acts of power, was the caſtration of an hundred free Romans, ſome of them married men, and even fathers of families: merely that his daughter, on her marriage with the young emperor, might be attended by a train of eunuchs worthy of an eaſtern queen. Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1271.

[69] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1274. Herodian, l. iii. p. 122. 129. The grammarian of Alexandria ſeems, as it is not unuſual, much better acquainted with this myſterious tranſaction, and more aſſured of the guilt of Plautianus, than the Roman ſenator ventures to be.

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the deſpotiſm of military command. His haughty and inflexible ſpirit could not diſcover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preſerving an intermediate power, however imaginary, between the emperor and the army. He diſdained to profeſs himſelf the ſervant of an aſſembly that deteſted his perſon and trembled at his frown; he iſſued his commands, where his requeſt would have proved as effectual; aſſumed the conduct and ſtyle of a ſovereign and a conqueror, and exerciſed, without diſguiſe, the whole legiſlative as well as the executive power.

New maxims of the Imperial prerogative.

The victory over the ſenate was eaſy and inglorious. Every eye and every paſſion were directed to the ſupreme magiſtrate, who poſſeſſed the arms and treaſure of the ſtate; whilſt the ſenate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by military force, nor animated by public ſpirit, reſted its declining authority on the frail and crumbling baſis of ancient opinion. The fine theory of a republic inſenſibly vaniſhed, and made way for the more natural and ſubſtantial feelings of monarchy. As the freedom and honours of Rome were ſucceſſively communicated to the provinces, in which the old government had been either unknown, or was remembered with abhorrence, the tradition of republican maxims was gradually obliterated. The Greek hiſtorians of the age of the Antonines[70] obſerve with a malicious pleaſure, that although the ſovereign of Rome, in compliance with an obſolete prejudice, abſtained from the name of king, he poſſeſſed the

[70] Appian in Procm.

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full measure of regal power. In the reign of Severus, the senate was filled with polished and eloquent slaves from the eastern provinces, who justified personal flattery by speculative principles of servitude. These new advocates of prerogative were heard with pleasure by the court, and with patience by the people, when they inculcated the duty of passive obedience, and descanted on the inevitable mischiefs of freedom. The lawyers and the historians concurred in teaching, that the Imperial authority was held, not by the delegated commission, but by the irrevocable resignation of the senate; that the emperor was freed from the restraint of civil laws, could command by his arbitrary will the lives and fortunes of his subjects, and might dispose of the empire as of his private patrimony[71]. The most eminent of the civil lawyers, and particularly Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, flourished under the house of Severus; and the Roman jurisprudence having closely united itself with the system of monarchy, was supposed to have attained its full maturity and perfection.

The contemporaries of Severus, in the enjoyment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave the cruelties by which it had been introduced. Posterity, who experienced the fatal effects of his maxims and example, justly considered him as the principal author of the decline of the Roman empire.

[71] Dion Cassius seems to have written with no other view, than to form these opinions into an historical system. The Pandects will shew how assiduously the lawyers, on their side, laboured in the cause of prerogative.

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The Death of Severus.—Tyranny of Caracálla.—Uſurpation of Macrinus.—Follies of Elagabalus.—Virtues of Alexander Severus.—Licentiouſneſs of the Army.—General State of the Roman Finances.

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Greatneſs and diſcontent of Severus.

THE aſcent to greatneſs, however ſteep and dangerous, may entertain an active ſpirit with the conſciouſneſs and exerciſe of its own powers; but the poſſeſſion of a throne could never yet afford a laſting ſatisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble ſtation, elevated him to the firſt place among mankind. "He "had been all things," as he ſaid himſelf, "and "all was of little value[1]." Diſtracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preſerving an empire, oppreſſed with age and infirmities, careleſs of fame[2], and ſatiated with power, all his proſpects of life were cloſed. The deſire of perpetuating the greatneſs of his family, was the only remaining wiſh of his ambition and paternal tenderneſs.

His wife the Empreſs Julia.

Like moſt of the Africans, Severus was paſſionately addicted to the vain ſtudies of magic and divination, deeply verſed in the interpreta-

1 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 71. "Omnia fui et nihil expedit."
2 Dion Caſſius, l. lxxvi. p. 1284.

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tion of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the ſcience of judicial aſtrology; which, in almoſt every age except the preſent, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He had loſt his firſt wife, whilſt he was governor of the Lionneſe Gaul [3]. In the choice of a ſecond, he ſought only to connect himſelf with ſome favourite of fortune; and as ſoon as he had diſcovered that a young lady of Emeſa in Syria had *a royal nativity*, he ſolicited, and obtained her hand [4]. Julia Domna (for that was her name) deſerved all that the ſtars could promiſe her. She poſſeſſed, even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty [5], and united to a lively imagination a firmneſs of mind and ſtrength of judgment, ſeldom beſtowed on her ſex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impreſſion on the dark and jealous temper of her huſband; but in her ſon's reign, ſhe adminiſtered the principal affairs of the empire, with a prudence that ſupported his authority; and with a moderation that ſometimes corrected his wild extravagancies [6]. Julia applied herſelf to letters and philoſophy, with ſome ſucceſs, and with the moſt ſplendid

[3] About the year 186, M. de Tillemont is miſerably embarraſſed with a paſſage of Dion, in which the empreſs Fauſtina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia (l. lxxiv. p. 1243.). The learned compiler forgot, that Dion is relating, not a real fact, but a dream of Severus; and dreams are circumſcribed to no limits of time or ſpace. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were *conſummated* in the temple of Venus at Rome? Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 389. Note 6.

[4] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 65. [5] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 85.

[6] Dion Caſſius, l. lxxvii. p. 1304. 1314.

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reputation. She was the patroneſs of every art, and the friend of every man of genius[7]. The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtue; but, if we may credit the ſcandal of ancient hiſtory, chaſtity was very far from being the moſt conſpicuous virtue of the empreſs Julia[8].

Their two ſons, Caracalla and Geta.

Two ſons, Caracalla[9] and Geta, were the fruit of this marriage, and the deſtined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father, and of the Roman world, were ſoon diſappointed by theſe vain youths, who diſplayed the indolent ſecurity of hereditary princes; and a preſumption that fortune would ſupply the place of merit and application. Without any emulation of virtue or talents, they diſcovered, almoſt from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other. Their averſion, confirmed by years, and fomented by the arts of their intereſted favourites, broke out in childiſh, and, gradually in more ſerious, competitions; and, at length, divided the theatre, the circus, and the court, into two factions; actuated by the hopes and fears of their reſpective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavoured, by every expedient of advice and

Their mutual averſion to each other.

7 See a Diſſertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius, de Fœminis Philoſophis.

8 Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1285. Aurelius Victor.

9 Baſſianus was his firſt name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign he aſſumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient hiſtorians. After his death, the public indignation loaded him with the nick-names of Tarantus and Caracalla. The firſt was borrowed from a celebrated Gladiator, the ſecond from a long Gallic gown which he diſtributed to the people of Rome.

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authority, to allay this growing animosity. The unhappy discord of his sons clouded all his prospects, and threatened to overturn a throne raised with so much labour, cemented with so much blood, and guarded with every defence of arms and treasure. With an impartial hand he maintained between them an exact balance of favour, conferred on both the rank of Augustus, with the revered name of Antoninus; and for the first time the Roman world beheld three emperors [10]. Yet even this equal conduct served only to inflame the contest, whilst the fierce Caracalla asserted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the soldiers. In the anguish of a disappointed father, Severus foretold, that the weaker of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger; who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices [11]. CHAP. VI. Three emperors.

In these circumstances the intelligence of a war in Britain, and of an invasion of the province by the barbarians of the North, was received with pleasure by Severus. Though the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been sufficient to repel the distant enemy, he resolved to embrace the honourable pretext of withdrawing his sons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds and irritated their passions; and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithstanding his advanced age (for The Caledonian war. A. D. 208.

[10] The elevation of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillemont to the year 198: the association of Geta to the year 208.

[11] Herodian, l. iii. p. 130. The lives of Caracalla and Geta in the Augustan History.

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he was above three-ſcore), and his gout, which obliged him to be carried in a litter, he tranſported himſelf in perſon into that remote iſland, attended by his two ſons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately paſſed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country, with a deſign of completing the long attempted conqueſt of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the iſland, without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuſcades of the Caledonians, who hung unſeen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldneſs of the climate, and the ſeverity of a winter march acroſs the hills and moraſſes of Scotland, are reported to have coſt the Romans above fifty thouſand men. The Caledonians at length yielded to the powerful and obſtinate attack, ſued for peace, and ſurrendered a part of their arms, and a large tract of territory. But their apparent ſubmiſſion laſted no longer than the preſent terror. As ſoon as the Roman legions had retired, they reſumed their hoſtile independence. Their reſtleſs ſpirit provoked Severus to ſend a new army into Caledonia, with the moſt bloody orders, not to ſubdue but to extirpate the natives. They were ſaved by the death of their haughty enemy [12].

Fingal and his heroes.

This Caledonian war, neither marked by deciſive events, nor attended with any important conſequences, would ill deſerve our attention; but it is ſuppoſed, not without a conſiderable

[12] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1280, &c. Herodian, l. iii. p. 132, &c.

degree of probability, that the invaſion of Severus is connected with the moſt ſhining period of the Britiſh hiſtory or fable. Fingal, whoſe fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is ſaid to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a ſignal victory on the banks of the Carun, in which the ſon of *the King of the World*, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride[13]. Something of a doubtful miſt ſtill hangs over theſe Highland traditions; nor can it be entirely diſpelled by the moſt ingenious reſearches of modern criticiſm[14]: but if we could, with ſafety, indulge the pleaſing ſuppoſition, that Fingal lived, and that Oſſian ſung, the ſtriking contraſt of the ſituation and manners of the contending nations might amuſe a philoſophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Cara-

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Contraſt of the Caledonians and the Romans.

[13] Oſſian's Poems, vol. i. p. 175.

[14] That the Caracul of Oſſian is the Caracalla of the Roman Hiſtory, is, perhaps, the only point of Britiſh antiquity in which Mr. Macpherſon and Mr. Whitaker are of the ſame opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war, the ſon of Severus was known only by the appellation of Antoninus; and it may ſeem ſtrange, that the Highland bard ſhould deſcribe him by a nick-name, invented four years afterwards, ſcarcely uſed by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and ſeldom employed by the moſt ancient hiſtorians. See Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1317. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 89. Aurel. Victor. Euſeb. in Chron. ad ann. 214.

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calla, with the bravery, the tenderneſs, the elegant genius of Oſſian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or intereſt, ſerved under the Imperial ſtandard, with the freeborn warriors who ſtarted to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and ſlavery.

Ambition of Caracalla.

The declining health and laſt illneſs of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black paſſions of Caracalla's ſoul. Impatient of any delay or diviſion of empire, he attempted, more than once, to ſhorten the ſmall remainder of his father's days, and endeavoured, but without ſucceſs, to excite a mutiny among the troops[15]. The old emperor had often cenſured the miſguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a ſingle act of juſtice, might have ſaved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthleſs ſon. Placed in the ſame ſituation, he experienced how eaſily the rigour of a judge diſſolves away in the tenderneſs of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not puniſh; and this laſt and only inſtance of mercy was more fatal to the empire than a long ſeries of cruelty[16]. The diſorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wiſhed impatiently for death, and haſtened the inſtant of it by his impatience. He expired at York in

Death of Severus, and acceſſion of his two ſons. A. D. 411. 4th February.

[15] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1282. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 71. Aurel. Victor.
[16] Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1283. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 89.

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the ſixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and ſucceſsful reign. In his laſt moments he recommended concord to his ſons, and his ſons to the army. The ſalutary advice never reached the heart, or even the underſtanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance, and of the authority of their deceaſed maſter, reſiſted the ſolicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes ſoon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honours, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful ſovereigns, by the ſenate, the people, and the provinces. Some pre-eminence of rank ſeems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both adminiſtered the empire with equal and independent power [17].

Jealouſy and hatred of the two emperors.

Such a divided form of government would have proved a ſource of diſcord between the moſt affectionate brothers. It was impoſſible that it could long ſubſiſt between two implacable enemies, who neither deſired nor could truſt a reconciliation. It was viſible, that one only could reign, and that the other muſt fall; and each of them judging of his rival's deſigns by his own, guarded his life with the moſt jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poiſon or the ſword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy,

17 Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Herodian, l. iii. p. 135.

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during which they never eat at the ſame table, or ſlept in the ſame houſe, diſplayed to the provinces the odious ſpectacle of fraternal diſcord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vaſt extent of the Imperial palace [18]. No communication was allowed between their apartments; the doors and paſſages were diligently fortified, and guards poſted and relieved with the ſame ſtrictneſs as in a beſieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the preſence of their afflicted mother; and each ſurrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on theſe occaſions of ceremony, the diſſimulation of courts could ill diſguiſe the rancour of their hearts [19].

Fruitleſs negociation for dividing the empire between them.

This latent civil war already diſtracted the whole government, when a ſcheme was ſuggeſted that ſeemed of mutual benefit to the hoſtile bro-

[18] Mr. Hume is juſtly ſurpriſed at a paſſage in Herodian (l. iv. p. 139.), who, on this occaſion, repreſents the Imperial palace as equal in extent to the reſt of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine Mount on which it was built, occupied, at moſt, a circumference of eleven or twelve thouſand feet (ſee the Notitia and Victor, in Nardini's Roma Antica). But we ſhould recollect that the opulent ſenators had almoſt ſurrounded the city with their extenſive gardens and ſuperb palaces, the greateſt part of which had been gradually confiſcated by the emperors. If Geta reſided in the gardens that bore his name on the Janiculum, and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Mæcenas on the Eſqueline, the rival brothers were ſeparated from each other by the diſtance of ſeveral miles; and yet the intermediate ſpace was filled by the Imperial gardens of Salluſt, of Lucullus, of Agrippa, of Domitian, of Caius, &c. all ſkirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the ſtreets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deſerves, a particular diſſertation, illuſtrated by a map of ancient Rome.

[19] Herodian, l. iv. p. 139.

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thers. It was propoſed, that ſince it was impoſſible to reconcile their minds, they ſhould ſeparate their intereſt, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with ſome accuracy. It was agreed, that Caracalla, as the elder brother, ſhould remain in poſſeſſion of Europe and the weſtern Africa; and that he ſhould relinquiſh the ſovereignty of Aſia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his reſidence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itſelf in wealth and greatneſs; that numerous armies ſhould be conſtantly encamped on either ſide of the Thracian Boſphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the ſenators of European extraction ſhould acknowledge the ſovereign of Rome, whilſt the natives of Aſia followed the emperor of the Eaſt. The tears of the empreſs Julia interrupted the negociation, the firſt idea of which had filled every Roman breaſt with ſurpriſe and indignation. The mighty maſs of conqueſt was ſo intimately united by the hand of time and policy, that it required the moſt forcible violence to rend it aſunder. The Romans had reaſon to dread, that the disjointed members would ſoon be reduced by a civil war under the dominion of one maſter; but if the ſeparation was permanent, the diviſion of the provinces muſt terminate in the diſſolution of an empire whoſe unity had hitherto remained inviolate[20].

[20] Herodian, l. iv. p. 144.

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Murder of Geta. A. D. 212. 27th February.

Had the treaty been carried into execution, the ſovereign of Europe might ſoon have been the conqueror of Aſia; but Caracalla obtained an eaſier though a more guilty victory. He artfully liſtened to his mother's entreaties, and conſented to meet his brother in her apartment, on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midſt of their converſation, ſome centurions, who had contrived to conceal themſelves, ruſhed with drawn ſwords upon the unfortunate Geta. His diſtracted mother ſtrove to protect him in her arms; but, in the unavailing ſtruggle, ſhe was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger ſon, while ſhe ſaw the elder animating and aſſiſting[21] the fury of the aſſaſſins. As ſoon as the deed was perpetrated, Caracalla, with haſty ſteps, and horror in his countenance, ran towards the Prætorian camp as his only refuge, and threw himſelf on the ground before the ſtatues of the tutelar deities[22]. The ſoldiers attempted to raiſe and comfort him. In broken and diſordered words he informed them of his imminent danger and fortunate eſcape; inſinuating that he had prevented the deſigns of his enemy, and declared his reſolution to live and die with his faith-

[21] Caracalla conſecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the ſword, with which, as he boaſted, he had ſlain his brother Geta. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.

[22] Herodian, l. iv. p. 147. In every Roman camp there was a ſmall chapel near the head quarters, in which the ſtatues of the tutelar deities were preſerved and adored; and we may remark, that the eagles, and other military enſigns, were in the firſt rank of theſe deities: an excellent inſtitution, which confirmed diſcipline by the ſanction of religion. See Lipſius de Militiâ Romanâ, iv. 5. v. 2.

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ful troops. Geta had been the favourite of the ſoldiers; but complaint was uſeleſs, revenge was dangerous, and they ſtill reverenced the ſon of Severus. Their diſcontent died away in idle murmurs, and Caracalla ſoon convinced them of the juſtice of his cauſe, by diſtributing in one laviſh donative the accumulated treaſures of his father's reign [23]. The real *ſentiments* of the ſoldiers alone were of importance to his power or ſafety. Their declaration in his favour commanded the dutiful *profeſſions* of the ſenate. The obſequious aſſembly was always prepared to ratify the deciſion of fortune; but as Caracalla wiſhed to aſſuage the firſt emotions of public indignation, the name of Geta was mentioned with decency, and he received the funeral honours of a Roman emperor [24]. Poſterity, in pity to his miſfortune, has caſt a veil over his vices. We conſider that young prince as the innocent victim of his brother's ambition, without recollecting that he himſelf wanted power, rather than inclination, to conſummate the ſame attempts of revenge and murder.

Remorſe and cruelty of Caracalla.

The crime went not unpuniſhed. Neither buſineſs, nor pleaſure, nor flattery, could defend Caracalla from the ſtings of a guilty conſcience; and he confeſſed, in the anguiſh of a tortured mind, that his diſordered fancy often beheld the angry forms of his father and his brother riſing

[23] Herodian, l. iv. p. 148. Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1289.

[24] Geta was placed among the gods. Sit *divus*, dum non ſit *vivus*, ſaid his brother. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 91. Some marks of Geta's conſecration are ſtill found upon medals.

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into life, to threaten and upbraid him[25]. The conſciouſneſs of his crime ſhould have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal neceſſity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recal the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the ſenate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of ſeveral noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger ſon. The jealous emperor threatened them with inſtant death; the ſentence was executed againſt Fadilla, the laſt remaining daughter of the emperor Marcus; and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to ſilence her lamentations, to ſuppreſs her ſighs, and to receive the aſſaſſin with ſmiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thouſand perſons of both ſexes ſuffered death. His guards and freedmen, the miniſters of his ſerious buſineſs, and the companions of his looſer hours, thoſe who by his intereſt had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long-connected chain of their dependents, were included in the proſcription; which endeavoured to reach every one who had maintained the ſmalleſt correſpondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name[26].

Helvius

[25] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.

[26] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1290. Herodian, l. iv. p. 150. Dion (p. 1298.) ſays, that the comic poets no longer durſt employ the name

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Helvius Pertinax, ſon to the prince of that name, loſt his life by an unſeaſonable witticiſm [27]. It was a ſufficient crime of Thraſea Priſcus to be deſcended from a family in which the love of liberty ſeemed an hereditary quality [28]. The particular cauſes of calumny and ſuſpicion were at length exhauſted; and when a ſenator was accuſed of being a ſecret enemy to the government, the emperor was ſatisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the moſt bloody inferences.

Death of Papinian.

The execution of ſo many innocent citizens was bewailed by the ſecret tears of their friends and families. The death of Papinian, the Prætorian præfect, was lamented as a public calamity. During the laſt ſeven years of Severus, he had exerciſed the moſt important offices of the ſtate, and, by his ſalutary influence, guided the emperor's ſteps in the paths of juſtice and moderation. In full aſſurance of his virtues and abilities, Severus, on his death-bed, had conjured him to watch over the proſperity and union

name of Geta in their plays, and that the eſtates of thoſe who mentioned it in their teſtaments, were confiſcated.

27 Caracalla had aſſumed the names of ſeveral conquered nations: Pertinax obſerved, that the name of *Geticus* (he had obtained ſome advantage of the Goths or Getæ) would be a proper addition to Parthicus, Alemannicus, &c. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 89.

28 Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1291. He was probably deſcended from Helvidius Priſcus, and Thraſea Pætus, thoſe patriots whoſe firm, but uſeleſs and unſeaſonable virtue, has been immortalized by Tacitus.

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of the Imperial family [29]. The honeſt labours of Papinian ſerved only to inflame the hatred which Caracalla had already conceived againſt his father's miniſter. After the murder of Geta, the Præfect was commanded to exert the powers of his ſkill and eloquence in a ſtudied apology for that atrocious deed. The philoſophic Seneca had condeſcended to compoſe a ſimilar epiſtle to the ſenate, in the name of the ſon and aſſaſſin of Agrippina [30]; "That it was eaſier to commit "than to juſtify a parricide," was the glorious reply of Papinian [31], who did not heſitate between the loſs of life and that of honour. Such intrepid virtue, which had eſcaped pure and unſullied from the intrigues of courts, the habits of buſineſs, and the arts of his profeſſion, reflects more luſtre on the memory of Papinian, than all his great employments, his numerous writings, and the ſuperior reputation as a lawyer, which he has preſerved through every age of the Roman juriſprudence [32].

His tyranny extended over the whole empire.

It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worſt of times their conſolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Auguſtus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus, viſited their extenſive dominions in perſon, and their progreſs was marked by acts of wiſdom and beneficence.

[29] It is ſaid that Papinian was himſelf a relation of the empreſs Julia.

[30] Tacit. Annal. xiv. 2. [31] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 88.

[32] With regard to Papinian, ſee Heineccius's Hiſtoria Juris Romani, l. 330, &c.

The

The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian, who reſided almoſt conſtantly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the ſenatorial and equeſtrian orders[33]. But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and he never returned to it) about a year after the murder of Geta. The reſt of his reign was ſpent in the ſeveral provinces of the empire, particularly thoſe of the Eaſt, and every province was by turns the ſcene of his rapine and cruelty. The ſenators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immenſe expence, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect, in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either diſdained to viſit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The moſt wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiſcations, and the great body of his ſubjects oppreſſed by ingenious and aggravated taxes[34]. In the midſt of peace, and upon the ſlighteſt provocation, he iſſued his commands, at Alexandria in Egypt, for a general maſſacre. From a ſecure poſt in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the ſlaughter of many thouſand citizens, as well as ſtrangers, without diſtinguiſhing either the number or the crime of the ſufferers; ſince, as he coolly informed

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A.D. 213.

33 Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neighbourhood of Rome. Nero made a ſhort journey into Greece. "Et laudatorum Principum uſus ex æquo quamvis procul agentibus. Sævi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 75.

34 Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1294.

the

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the ſenate, *all* the Alexandrians, thoſe who had periſhed and thoſe who had eſcaped, were alike guilty [35].

Relaxation of diſcipline.

The wiſe inſtructions of Severus never made any laſting impreſſion on the mind of his ſon, who, although not deſtitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity [36]. One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abuſed by Caracalla, "To ſecure the affections of the army, "and to eſteem the reſt of his ſubjects as of "little moment [37]." But the liberality of the father had been reſtrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was tempered by firmneſs and authority. The careleſs profuſion of the ſon was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigour of the ſoldiers, inſtead of being confirmed by the ſevere diſcipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The exceſſive increaſe of their pay and donatives [38] exhauſted the

35 Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307. Herodian, l. iv. p. 158. The former repreſents it as a cruel maſſacre, the latter as a perfidious one too. It ſeems probable, that the Alexandrians had irritated the tyrant by their railleries, and perhaps by their tumults.

36 Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1296.

37 Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1284. Mr. Wotton (Hiſt. of Rome, p. 330.) ſuſpects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himſelf, and attributed to his father.

38 Dion (l. lxxviii. p. 1343.) informs us, that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to ſeventy millions of drachmæ (about two millions three hundred and fifty thouſand pounds). There is another paſſage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely curious; were it not obſcure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The beſt ſenſe ſeems to be, that the Prætorian guards

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the ſtate to enrich the military order, whoſe modeſty in peace, and ſervice in war, are beſt ſecured by an honourable poverty. The demeanor of Caracalla was haughty and full of pride; but with the troops he forgot even the proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their inſolent familiarity, and, neglecting the eſſential duties of a general, affected to imitate the dreſs and manners of a common ſoldier.

Murder of Caracalla. A. D. 217. 8th March.

It was impoſſible that ſuch a character, and ſuch a conduct as that of Caracalla, could inſpire either love or eſteem; but as long as his vices were beneficial to the armies, he was ſecure from the danger of rebellion. A ſecret conſpiracy, provoked by his own jealouſy, was fatal to the tyrant. The Prætorian præfecture was divided between two miniſters. The military department was intruſted to Adventus, an experienced rather than an able ſoldier; and the civil affairs were tranſacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in buſineſs, had raiſed himſelf, with a fair character, to that high office. But his favour varied with the caprice of the emperor, and his life might depend on the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion, or the moſt caſual circumſtance. Malice or fanaticiſm had ſuggeſted to an African, deeply

guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmæ (forty pounds) a year (Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1307.). Under the reign of Auguſtus, they were paid at the rate of two drachmæ, or denarii, per day, 720 a year (Tacit. Annal. i. 17.). Domitian, who increaſed the ſoldiers pay one fourth, muſt have raiſed the Prætorians to 960 drachmæ (Gronovius de Pecuniâ Veteri, l. iii. c. 2.). Theſe ſucceſſive augmentations ruined the empire, for, with the ſoldiers pay, their numbers too were increaſed. We have ſeen the Prætorians alone increaſed from 10,000 to 50,000 men.

ſkilled

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ſkilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his ſon were deſtined to reign over the empire. The report was ſoon diffuſed through the province; and when the man was ſent in chains to Rome, he ſtill aſſerted, in the preſence of the Præfect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magiſtrate, who had received the moſt preſſing inſtructions to inform himſelf of the *ſucceſſors* of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the Imperial court, which at the time reſided in Syria. But, notwithſtanding the diligence of the public meſſengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprize him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot race, he delivered them unopened to the Prætorian Præfect, directing him to diſpatch the ordinary affairs, and to report the more important buſineſs that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate, and reſolved to prevent it. He inflamed the diſcontents of ſome inferior officers, and employed the hand of Martialis, a deſperate ſoldier, who had been refuſed the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edeſſa to the celebrated temple of the Moon at Carrhæ. He was attended by a body of cavalry; but having ſtopped on the road for ſome neceſſary occaſion, his guards preſerved a reſpectful diſtance, and Martialis approaching his perſon under a pretence of duty, ſtabbed him with a dagger. The bold aſſaſſin

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assassin was instantly killed by a Scythian archer of the Imperial guard. Such was the end of a monster whose life disgraced human nature, and whose reign accused the patience of the Romans [39]. The grateful soldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the senate to prostitute their own dignity and that of religion by granting him a place among the gods. Whilst he was upon earth, Alexander the Great was the only hero whom this god deemed worthy his admiration. He assumed the name and ensigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards, persecuted the disciples of Aristotle, and displayed with a puerile enthusiasm the only sentiment by which he discovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can easily conceive, that after the battle of Narva, and the conquest of Poland, Charles the Twelfth (though he still wanted the more elegant accomplishments of the son of Philip) might boast of having rivalled his valour and magnanimity: but in no one action of his life did Caracalla express the faintest resemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and of his father's friends [40].

Imitation of Alexander.

After the extinction of the house of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a

Election and character of Macrinus.

39 Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1312. Herodian, l. iv. p. 168.

40 The fondness of Caracalla for the name and ensigns of Alexander, is still preserved on the medals of that emperor. See Spanheim, de Usu Numismatum, Dissertat. xii. Herodian (l. iv. p. 154.) had seen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn, with one side of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla.

master.

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maſter. The choice of the army (for the authority of a diſtant and feeble ſenate was little regarded) hung in an anxious ſuſpenſe; as no candidate preſented himſelf whoſe diſtinguiſhed birth and merit could engage their attachment and unite their ſuffrages. The deciſive weight of the Prætorian guards elevated the hopes of their præfects, and theſe powerful miniſters began to aſſert their *legal* claim to fill the vacancy of the Imperial throne. Adventus, however, the ſenior præfect, conſcious of his age and infirmities, of his ſmall reputation, and his ſmaller abilities, reſigned the dangerous honour to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whoſe well-diſſembled grief removed all ſuſpicion of his being acceſſary to his maſter's death [41]. The troops neither loved nor eſteemed his character. They caſt their eyes around in ſearch of a competitor, and at laſt yielded with reluctance to his promiſes of unbounded liberality and indulgence.

A.D. 217. March 11.

A ſhort time after his acceſſion, he conferred on his ſon Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the Imperial title and the popular name of Antoninus. The beautiful figure of the youth, aſſiſted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furniſhed a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favour of the army, and ſecure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

Diſcontent of the ſenate.

The authority of the new ſovereign had been ratified by the cheerful ſubmiſſion of the ſenate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpected

[41] Herodian, l. iv. p. 169. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 94.

deliver-

deliverance from a hated tyrant, and it ſeemed of little conſequence to examine into the virtues of the ſucceſſor of Caracalla. But as ſoon as the firſt tranſports of joy and ſurpriſe had ſubſided, they began to ſcrutinize the merits of Macrinus with a critical ſeverity, and to arraign the haſty choice of the army. It had hitherto been conſidered as a fundamental maxim of the conſtitution, that the emperor muſt be always choſen in the ſenate, and the ſovereign power, no longer exerciſed by the whole body, was always delegated to one of its members. But Macrinus was not a ſenator [42]. The ſudden elevation of the Prætorian præfects betrayed the meanneſs of their origin; and the equeſtrian order was ſtill in poſſeſſion of that great office, which commanded with arbitrary ſway the lives and fortunes of the ſenate. A murmur of indignation was heard, that a man whoſe obſcure [43] extraction had never been illuſtrated by any ſignal ſervice, ſhould dare to inveſt himſelf with the purple, inſtead of beſtowing it on ſome diſtinguiſhed ſenator, equal

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[42] Dion, l. lxxxviii. p. 1350. Elagabalus reproached his predeceſſor, with daring to ſeat himſelf on the throne; though, as Prætorian præfect, he could not have been admitted into the ſenate after the voice of the cryer had cleared the houſe. The perſonal favour of Plautianus and Sejanus had broke through the eſtabliſhed rule. They roſe indeed from the equeſtrian order; but they preſerved the præfecture with the rank of ſenator, and even with the conſulſhip.

[43] He was a native of Cæſarea in Numidia, and began his fortune by ſerving in the houſehold of Plautian, from whoſe ruin he narrowly eſcaped. His enemies aſſerted, that he was born a ſlave, and had exerciſed, among other infamous profeſſions, that of Gladiator. The faſhion of aſperſing the birth and condition of an adverſary, ſeems to have laſted from the time of the Greek orators, to the learned grammarians of the laſt age.

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in birth and dignity to the ſplendour of the Imperial ſtation. As ſoon as the character of Macrinus was ſurveyed by the ſharp eye of diſcontent, ſome vices, and many defects, were eaſily diſcovered. The choice of his miniſters was in many inſtances juſtly cenſured, and the diſſatisfied people, with their uſual candour, accuſed at once his indolent tameneſs and his exceſſive ſeverity [44].

and the army.

His raſh ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to ſtand with firmneſs, and impoſſible to fall without inſtant deſtruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil buſineſs, he trembled in the preſence of the fierce and undiſciplined multitude over whom he had aſſumed the command; his military talents were deſpiſed, and his perſonal courage ſuſpected; a whiſper that circulated in the camp, diſcloſed the fatal ſecret of the conſpiracy againſt the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baſeneſs of hypocriſy, and heightened contempt by deteſtation. To alienate the ſoldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting: and ſuch was the peculiar hardſhip of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exerciſe that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and diſorder; and if that worthleſs

44 Both Dion and Herodian ſpeak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus, with candour and impartiality; but the author of his life, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, ſeems to have implicitly copied ſome of the venal writers, employed by Elagabalus, to blacken the memory of his predeceſſor.

tyrant

tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the future consequences of his own conduct, he would perhaps have enjoyed the dark prospect of the distress and calamities which he bequeathed to his successors. CHAP. VI.

In the management of this necessary reformation, Macrinus proceeded with a cautious prudence, which would have restored health and vigour to the Roman army, in an easy and almost imperceptible manner. To the soldiers already engaged in the service, he was constrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate though liberal establishment of Severus, and gradually formed to modesty and obedience[45]. One fatal error destroyed the salutary effects of this judicious plan. The numerous army, assembled in the East by the late emperor, instead of being immediately dispersed by Macrinus through the several provinces, was suffered to remain united in Syria, during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleness of their quarters, the troops viewed their strength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, instead of being flattered by the advantageous distinction, were alarmed by the first steps of the emperor, which they

Macrinus attempts a reformation of the army.

45 Dion, l. lxxxiii. p. 1336. The sense of the author is as clear as the intention of the emperor; but M. Wotton has mistaken both, by understanding the distinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. History of Rome, p. 347.

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considered as the presage of his future intentions. The recruits, with sullen reluctance, entered on a service, whose labours were increased while its rewards were diminished by a covetous and unwarlike sovereign. The murmurs of the army swelled with impunity into seditious clamours; and the partial mutinies betrayed a spirit of discontent and disaffection, that waited only for the slightest occasion to break out on every side into a general rebellion. To minds thus disposed, the occasion soon presented itself.

Death of the empress Julia. Education, pretensions, and revolt of Elagabalus, called at first Bassianus and Antoninus.

The empress Julia had experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune. From an humble station she had been raised to greatness, only to taste the superior bitterness of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her sons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good sense must have long taught her to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empress. Notwithstanding the respectful civility expressed by the usurper towards the widow of Severus, she descended with a painful struggle into the condition of a subject, and soon withdrew herself, by a voluntary death, from the anxious and humiliating dependence[46]. Julia Mæsa, her sister, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emesa with an immense fortune, the fruit of twenty years favour, accompanied by her two daughters, Soæmias and Mamæa, each of

[46] Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1330. The abridgment of Xiphilin, though less particular, is in this place clearer than the original.

whom was a widow, and each had an only ſon. Baſſianus, for that was the name of the ſon of Soæmias, was conſecrated to the honourable miniſtry of high prieſt of the Sun; and this holy vocation, embraced either from prudence or ſuperſtition, contributed to raiſe the Syrian youth to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of troops was ſtationed at Emeſa; and, as the ſevere diſcipline of Macrinus had conſtrained them to paſs the winter encamped, they were eager to revenge the cruelty of ſuch unaccuſtomed hardſhips. The ſoldiers, who reſorted in crowds to the temple of the Sun, beheld with veneration and delight the elegant dreſs and figure of the young Pontiff: they recogniſed, or they thought that they recogniſed, the features of Caracalla, whoſe memory they now adored. The artful Mæſa ſaw and cheriſhed their riſing partiality, and readily ſacrificing her daughter's reputation to the fortune of her grandſon, ſhe inſinuated that Baſſianus was the natural ſon of their murdered ſovereign. The ſums diſtributed by her emiſſaries with a laviſh hand, ſilenced every objection, and the profuſion ſufficiently proved the affinity, or at leaſt the reſemblance, of Baſſianus with the great original. The young Antoninus (for he had aſſumed and polluted that reſpectable name) was declared emperor by the troops of Emeſa, aſſerted his hereditary right, and called aloud on the armies to follow the ſtandard of a young and liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge

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A. D. 218. May 16.

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his father's death and the oppreſſion of the military order [47].

Defeat and death of Macrinus.

Whilſt a conſpiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigour, Macrinus, who, by a deciſive motion, might have cruſhed his infant enemy, floated between the oppoſite extremes of terror and ſecurity, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A ſpirit of rebellion diffuſed itſelf through all the camps and garriſons of Syria, ſucceſſive detachments murdered their officers [48], and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy reſtitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakneſs of Macrinus. At length he marched out of Antioch, to meet the increaſing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops ſeemed to take the field with faintneſs and reluctance; but, in the heat of the battle [49], the Prætorian guards, almoſt by an involuntary impulſe, aſſerted the

A.D. 218, 7th June.

47 According to Lampridius (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 135.), Alexander Severus lived twenty-nine years, three months, and ſeven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205, and was conſequently about this time thirteen years old, as his elder couſin might be about ſeventeen. This computation ſuits much better the hiſtory of the young princes, than that of Herodian (l. v. p. 181.), who repreſents them as three years younger; whilſt, by an oppoſite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conſpiracy, ſee Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1339. Herodian, l. v. p. 184.

48 By a moſt dangerous proclamation of the pretended Antoninus, every ſoldier who brought in his officer's head, became entitled to his private eſtate, as well as to his military commiſſion.

49 Dion, l. lxxviii. p. 1345. Herodian, l. v. p. 186. The battle was fought near the village of Immæ, about two and twenty miles from Antioch.

ſuperiority

ſuperiority of their valour and diſcipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who, according to their eaſtern cuſtom, had attended the army, threw themſelves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compaſſion of the ſoldiers, endeavoured to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himſelf, who, in the reſt of his life, never acted like a man, in this important criſis of his fate approved himſelf a hero, mounted his horſe, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged ſword in hand among the thickeſt of the enemy; whilſt the eunuch Gannys, whoſe occupations had been confined to female cares and the ſoft luxury of Aſia, diſplayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle ſtill raged with doubtful violence, and Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cauſe by a ſhameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice ſerved only to protract his life a few days, and to ſtamp deſerved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is ſcarcely neceſſary to add, that his ſon Diadumenianus was involved in the ſame fate. As ſoon as the ſtubborn Prætorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had baſely deſerted them, they ſurrendered to the conqueror; the contending parties of the Roman army mingling tears of joy and tenderneſs, united under the banners of the imagined ſon of Caracalla, and the Eaſt acknowledged with pleaſure the firſt emperor of Aſiatic extraction.

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Elagabalus writes to the ſenate.

The letters of Macrinus had condeſcended to inform the ſenate of the ſlight diſturbance occaſioned by an impoſtor in Syria, and a decree immediately paſſed, declaring the rebel and his family public enemies; with a promiſe of pardon, however, to ſuch of his deluded adherents as ſhould merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapſed from the declaration to the victory of Antoninus (for in ſo ſhort an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided), the capital and the provinces, more eſpecially thoſe of the Eaſt, were diſtracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and ſtained with a uſeleſs effuſion of civil blood, ſince whoſoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria, muſt reign over the empire. The ſpecious letters in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient ſenate, were filled with profeſſions of virtue and moderation; the ſhining examples of Marcus and Auguſtus, he ſhould ever conſider as the great rule of his adminiſtration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the ſtriking reſemblance of his own age and fortunes with thoſe of Auguſtus, who in the earlieſt youth had revenged by a ſucceſsful war the murder of his father. By adopting the ſtyle of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, ſon of Antoninus and grandſon of Severus, he tacitly aſſerted his hereditary claim to the empire; but, by aſſuming the tribunitian and proconſular powers before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the ſenate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the conſtitution was

was probably dictated either by the ignorance of his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce diſdain of his military followers [50].

Picture of Elagabalus, A.D. 219.

As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the moſt trifling amuſements, he waſted many months in his luxurious progreſs from Syria to Italy, paſſed at Nicomedia his firſt winter after his victory, and deferred till the enſuing ſummer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of Victory in the ſenate-houſe, conveyed to the Romans the juſt but unworthy reſemblance of his perſon and manners. He was drawn in his ſacerdotal robes of ſilk and gold, after the looſe flowing faſhion of the Medes and Phœnicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an ineſtimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white [51]. The grave ſenators confeſſed with a ſigh, that, after having long experienced the ſtern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of Oriental deſpotiſm.

His ſuperſtition.

The Sun was worſhipped at Emeſa, under the name of Elagabalus [52], and under the form of a

[50] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1353.

[51] Dion, lxxix. p. 1363. Herodian, l. v. p. 189.

[52] This name is derived by the learned from two Syriac words, *Ela* a God, and *Gabel* to form, the forming, or plaſtic God, a proper, and even happy epithet for the Sun. Wotton's Hiſtory of Rome, p. 378.

black

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black conical ſtone, which, as it was univerſally believed, had fallen from heaven on that ſacred place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not without ſome reaſon, aſcribed his elevation to the throne. The diſplay of ſuperſtitious gratitude, was the only ſerious buſineſs of his reign. The triumph of the god of Emeſa over all the religions of the earth, was the great object of his zeal and vanity: and the appellation of Elagabalus (for he preſumed as pontiff and favourite to adopt that ſacred name) was dearer to him than all the titles of Imperial greatneſs. In a ſolemn proceſſion through the ſtreets of Rome, the way was ſtrewed with gold duſt; the black ſtone ſet in precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by ſix milk-white horſes richly capariſoned. The pious emperor held the reins, and, ſupported by his miniſters, moved ſlowly backwards, that he might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine preſence. In a magnificent temple raiſed on the Palatine Mount, the ſacrifices of the god Elagabalus were celebrated with every circumſtance of coſt and ſolemnity. The richeſt wines, the moſt extraordinary victims, and the rareſt aromatics, were profuſely conſumed on his altar. Around the altar a chorus of Syrian damſels performed their laſcivious dances to the ſound of barbarian muſic, whilſt the graveſt perſonages of the ſtate and army, clothed in long Phœnician tunics, officiated in the meaneſt functions with affected zeal and ſecret indignation [53].

[53] Herodian, l. v. p. 199.

To

To this temple, as to the common centre of religious worſhip, the Imperial fanatic attempted to remove the Ancilia, the Palladium [54], and all the ſacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A crowd of inferiour deities attended in various ſtations the majeſty of the god of Emeſa; but his court was ſtill imperfect, till a female of diſtinguiſhed rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas had been firſt choſen for his conſort; but as it was dreaded leſt her warlike terrors might affright the ſoft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the Moon, adored by the Africans under the name of Aſtarte, was deemed a more ſuitable companion for the Sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her temple as a marriage portion, was tranſported with ſolemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and the day of theſe myſtic nuptials was a general feſtival in the capital and throughout the empire [55].

His profligate and effeminate luxury.

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable reſpect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of ſenſe by ſocial intercourſe, endearing connections, and the ſoft colouring of taſte and the imagination. But Elagabalus (I ſpeak of the emperor of that name),

54 He broke into the ſanctuary of Veſta, and carried away a ſtatue, which he ſuppoſed to be the Palladium; but the veſtals boaſted, that, by a pious fraud, they had impoſed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 103.

55 Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1360. Herodian, l. v. p. 193. The ſubjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal preſents to the new-married couple; and whatever they had promiſed during the life of Elagabalus, was carefully exacted under the adminiſtration of Mamæa.

corrupted

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corrupted by his youth, his country, and his fortune, abandoned himſelf to the groſſeſt pleaſures with ungoverned fury, and ſoon found diſguſt and ſatiety in the midſt of his enjoyments. The inflammatory powers of art were ſummoned to his aid: the confuſed multitude of women, of wines, and of diſhes, and the ſtudied variety of attitudes and ſauces, ſerved to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in theſe ſciences, the only ones cultivated and patroniſed by the monarch [56], ſignalized his reign, and tranſmitted his infamy to ſucceeding times. A capricious prodigality ſupplied the want of taſte and elegance; and whilſt Elagabalus laviſhed away the treaſures of his people in the wildeſt extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers applauded a ſpirit and magnificence unknown to the tameneſs of his predeceſſors. To confound the order of ſeaſons and climates [57], to ſport with the paſſions and prejudices of his ſubjects, and to ſubvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his moſt delicious amuſements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid ſucceſſion of wives, among whom was a veſtal virgin, raviſhed by force from her

[56] The invention of a new ſauce was liberally rewarded; but if it was not reliſhed, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing elſe, till he had diſcovered another more agreeable to the Imperial palate. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 111.

[57] He never would eat ſea-fiſh except at a great diſtance from the ſea; he then would diſtribute vaſt quantities of the rareſt ſorts, brought at an immenſe expence, to the peaſants of the inland country. Hiſt. Aug. p. 109.

ſacred

facred aſylum[58], were inſufficient to ſatisfy the impotence of his paſſions. The maſter of the Roman world affected to copy the dreſs and manners of the female ſex, preferred the diſtaff to the ſceptre, and diſhonoured the principal dignities of the empire by diſtributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly inveſted with the title and authority of the emperor's, or as he more properly ſtyled himſelf, of the empreſs's huſband[59].

Contempt of decency which diſtinguiſhed the Roman tyrants.

It may ſeem probable, the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy, and blackened by prejudice[60]. Yet confining ourſelves to the public ſcenes diſplayed before the Roman people, and atteſted by grave and contemporary hiſtorians, their inexpreſſible infamy ſurpaſſes that of any other age or country. The licence of an eaſtern monarch is ſecluded from the eye of curioſity by the inacceſſible walls of his ſeraglio. The ſentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleaſure, a regard for decency, and a reſpect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe; but

[58] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1358. Herodian, l. v. p. 192.

[59] Hierocles enjoyed that honour; but he would have been ſupplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived, by a potion, to enervate the powers of his rival, who being found on trial unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1363, 1364. A dancer was made præfect of the city, a charioteer præfect of the watch, a barber præfect of the proviſions. Theſe three miniſters, with many inferior officers, were all recommended, *enormitate membrorum*. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 105.

[60] Even the credulous compiler of his life, in the Auguſtan hiſtory (p. 111.), is inclined to ſuſpect that his vices may have been exaggerated,

the

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the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified every vice that could be collected from the mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure of impunity, careleſs of cenſure, they lived without reſtraint in the patient and humble ſociety of their ſlaves and paraſites. The emperor, in his turn, viewing every rank of his ſubjects with the ſame contemptuous indifference, aſſerted without control his ſovereign privilege of luſt and luxury.

Diſcontents of the army.

The moſt worthleſs of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the ſame diſorders which they allow in themſelves; and can readily diſcover ſome nice difference of age, character, or ſtation, to juſtify the partial diſtinction. The licentious ſoldiers, who had raiſed to the throne the diſſolute ſon of Caracalla, bluſhed at their ignominious choice, and turned with diſguſt from that monſter, to contemplate with pleaſure the opening virtues of his couſin Alexander the ſon of Mamæa. The crafty Mæſa, ſenſible that her grandſon Elagabalus muſt inevitably deſtroy himſelf by his own vices, had provided another and ſurer ſupport of her family. Embracing a favourable moment of fondneſs and devotion, ſhe had perſuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander, and to inveſt him with the title of Cæſar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer interrupted by the care of the earth. In the ſecond rank that amiable prince ſoon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's jealouſy, who reſolved to terminate the dangerous competition, either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival,

Alexander Severus declared Cæſar, A. D. 221.

His arts proved unſucceſsful; his vain deſigns were conſtantly diſcovered by his own loquacious folly, and diſappointed by thoſe virtuous and faithful ſervants whom the prudence of Mamæa had placed about the perſon of her ſon. In a haſty ſally of paſſion, Elagabalus reſolved to execute by force what he had been unable to compaſs by fraud, and by a deſpotic ſentence degraded his couſin from the rank and honours of Cæſar. The meſſage was received in the ſenate with ſilence, and in the camp with fury. The Prætorian guards ſwore to protect Alexander, and to revenge the diſhonoured majeſty of the throne. The tears and promiſes of the trembling Elagabalus, who only begged them to ſpare his life, and to leave him in the poſſeſſion of his beloved Hierocles, diverted their juſt indignation; and they contented themſelves with empowering their præfects to watch over the ſafety of Alexander, and the conduct of the emperor [61].

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It was impoſſible that ſuch a reconciliation ſhould laſt, or that even the mean ſoul of Elagabalus could hold an empire on ſuch humiliating terms of dependence. He ſoon attempted, by a dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the ſoldiers. The report of the death of Alexander, and the natural ſuſpicion that he had been murdered, inflamed their paſſions into fury, and the tempeſt of the camp could only be appeaſed by

Sedition of the guards, and murder of Elagabalus, A.D. 222, March 10.

[61] Dion, l. lxxix. p. 1365. Herodian, l. v. p. 195—201. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 105. The laſt of the three hiſtorians ſeems to have followed the beſt authors in his account of the revolution.

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the preſence and authority of the popular youth. Provoked at this new inſtance of their affection for his couſin, and their contempt for his perſon, the emperor ventured to puniſh ſome of the leaders of the mutiny. His unſeaſonable ſeverity proved inſtantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himſelf. Elagabalus was maſſacred by the indignant Prætorians, his mutilated corpſe dragged through the ſtreets of the city, and thrown into the Tyber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the ſenate; the juſtice of whoſe decree has been ratified by poſterity [62].

Acceſſion of Alexander Severus.

In the room of Elagabalus, his couſin Alexander was raiſed to the throne by the Prætorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whoſe name he aſſumed, was the ſame as that of his predeceſſor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the ſenate conferred upon him, in one day, the various titles and powers of the

[62] The æra of the death of Elagabalus, and of the acceſſion of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillemont, Valſecchi, Vignoli, and Torre biſhop of Adria. The queſtion is moſt aſſuredly intricate; but I ſtill adhere to the authority of Dion; the truth of whoſe calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whoſe text is juſtified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zonares, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years, nine months, and four days, from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 222. But what ſhall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunitian power? We ſhall reply with the learned Valſecchi, that the uſurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the ſon of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death. After reſolving this great difficulty, the ſmaller knots of this queſtion may be eaſily untied, or cut aſunder.

Imperial

Imperial dignity [63]. But as Alexander was a modeſt and dutiful youth, of only ſeventeen years of age, the reins of government were in the hands of two women, of his mother Mamæa, and of Mæſa, his grandmother. After the death of the latter, who ſurvived but a ſhort time the elevation of Alexander, Mamæa remained the ſole regent of her ſon and of the empire.

Power of his mother Mamæa.

In every age and country, the wiſer, or at leaſt the ſtronger, of the two ſexes, has uſurped the powers of the ſtate, and confined the other to the cares and pleaſures of domeſtic life. In hereditary monarchies, however, and eſpecially in thoſe of modern Europe, the gallant ſpirit of chivalry, and the law of ſucceſſion, have accuſtomed us to allow a ſingular exception; and a woman is often acknowledged the abſolute ſovereign of a great kingdom, in which ſhe would be deemed incapable of exerciſing the ſmalleſt employment, civil or military. But as the Roman emperors were ſtill conſidered as the generals and magiſtrates of the republic, their wives and mothers, although diſtinguiſhed by the name of Auguſta, were never aſſociated to their perſonal honours; and a female reign would have appeared an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of thoſe primitive Romans, who married without love, or loved without delicacy and reſpect [64]. The haughty Agrippina

[63] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 114. By this unuſual precipitation, the ſenate meant to confound the hopes of pretenders, and prevent the factions of the armies.

[64] Metellus Numidicus, the cenſor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that had kind Nature allowed us to

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Agrippina aſpired, indeed, to ſhare the honours of the empire, which ſhe had conferred on her ſon; but her mad ambition, deteſted by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was diſappointed by the artful firmneſs of Seneca and Burrhus [65]. The good ſenſe, or the indifference, of ſucceeding princes, reſtrained them from offending the prejudices of their ſubjects; and it was reſerved for the profligate Elagabalus, to diſcharge the acts of the ſenate, with the name of his mother Soæmias, who was placed by the ſide of the conſuls, and ſubſcribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legiſlative aſſembly. Her more prudent ſiſter, Mamæa, declined the uſeleſs and odious prerogative, and a ſolemn law was enacted, excluding women for ever from the ſenate, and devoting to the infernal gods, the head of the wretch by whom this ſanction ſhould be violated [66]. The ſubſtance, not the pageantry of power was the object of Mamæa's manly ambition. She maintained an abſolute and laſting empire over the mind of her ſon, and in his affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander, with her conſent, married the daughter of a Patrician; but his reſpect for his father-in-law, and love for the empreſs, were inconſiſtent with the tenderneſs or intereſt of Mamæa. The Patrician was executed on the ready accu-

exiſt without the help of women, we ſhould be delivered from a very troubleſome companion; and he could recommend matrimony, only as the ſacrifice of private pleaſure to public duty. Aulus Gellius, i. 6.

[65] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 5. [66] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 102. 107.

ſation

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ſation of treaſon, and the wife of Alexander driven with ignominy from the palace, and baniſhed into Africa [67].

Wiſe and moderate adminiſtration.

Notwithſtanding this act of jealous cruelty, as well as ſome inſtances of avarice, with which Mamæa is charged; the general tenour of her adminiſtration was equally for the benefit of her ſon and of the empire. With the approbation of the ſenate, ſhe choſe ſixteen of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous ſenators, as a perpetual council of ſtate, before whom every public buſineſs of moment was debated and determined. The celebrated Ulpian, equally diſtinguiſhed by his knowledge of, and his reſpect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmneſs of this ariſtocracy reſtored order and authority to the government. As ſoon as they had purged the city from foreign ſuperſtition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied themſelves to remove his worthleſs creatures from every department of public adminiſtration, and to ſupply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of juſtice, became the only recommendations for civil offices. Valour, and the love of diſcipline,

67 Dion, l. lxxx. p. 1369. Herodian, l. vi. p. 206. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 131. Herodian repreſents the Patricians as innocent. The Auguſtan Hiſtory, on the authority of Dexippus, condemns him, as guilty of a conſpiracy againſt the life of Alexander. It is impoſſible to pronounce between them: but Dion is an irreproachable witneſs of the jealouſy and cruelty of Mamæa toward the young empreſs, whoſe hard fate Alexander lamented, but durſt not oppoſe.

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the only qualifications for military employments [68].

Education and virtuous temper of Alexander.

But the moſt important care of Mamæa and her wife counſellors, was to form the character of the young emperor, on whoſe perſonal qualities the happineſs or miſery of the Roman world muſt ultimately depend. The fortunate ſoil aſſiſted, and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent underſtanding ſoon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleaſure of knowledge, and the neceſſity of labour. A natural mildneſs and moderation of temper preſerved him from the aſſaults of paſſion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his eſteem for the wiſe Ulpian, guarded his unexperienced youth from the poiſon of flattery.

Journal of his ordinary life.

The ſimple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleaſing picture of an accompliſhed emperor [69], and with ſome allowance for the difference of manners, might well deſerve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander roſe early; the firſt moments of the day were conſecrated to private devotion, and his domeſtic chapel was filled with the images of thoſe heroes, who, by improving or reforming human life, had deſerved

[68] Herodian, l. vi. p. 203. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 119. The latter inſinuates, that when any law was to be paſſed, the council was aſſiſted by a number of able lawyers and experienced ſenators, whoſe opinions were ſeparately given, and taken down in writing.

[69] See his life in the Auguſtan Hiſtory. The undiſtinguiſhing compiler has buried theſe intereſting anecdotes under a load of trivial and unmeaning circumſtances.

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the grateful reverence of poſterity. But, as he deemed the ſervice of mankind the moſt acceptable worſhip of the gods, the greateſt part of his morning hours was employed in his council, where he diſcuſſed public affairs, and determined private cauſes, with a patience and diſcretion above his years. The dryneſs of buſineſs was relieved by the charms of literature; and a portion of time was always ſet apart for his favourite ſtudies of poetry, hiſtory, and philoſophy. The works of Virgil and Horace, the republics of Plato and Cicero, formed his taſte, enlarged his underſtanding, and gave him the nobleſt ideas of man and government. The exerciſes of the body ſucceeded to thoſe of the mind; and Alexander, who was tall, active, and robuſt, ſurpaſſed moſt of his equals in the gymnaſtic arts. Refreſhed by the uſe of the bath and a ſlight dinner, he reſumed, with new vigour, the buſineſs of the day; and, till the hour of ſupper, the principal meal of the Romans, he was attended by his ſecretaries, with whom he read and anſwered the multitude of letters, memorials, and petitions, that muſt have been addreſſed to the maſter of the greateſt part of the world. His table was ſerved with the moſt frugal ſimplicity; and whenever he was at liberty to conſult his own inclination, the company conſiſted of a few ſelect friends, men of learning and virtue, amongſt whom Ulpian was conſtantly invited. Their converſation was familiar and inſtructive; and the pauſes were occaſionally enlivened by the recital of ſome pleaſing compoſition, which ſupplied the

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place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators, ſo frequently ſummoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans [70]. The dreſs of Alexander was plain and modeſt, his demeanor courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his ſubjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleuſinian myſteries, pronouncing the ſame ſalutary admonition; "Let "none enter thoſe holy walls, unleſs he is con- "ſcious of a pure and innocent mind [71]."

General happineſs of the Roman world. A. D. 222—235.

Such an uniform tenour of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wiſdom and juſtice of Alexander's government, than all the trifling details preſerved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the acceſſion of Commodus, the Roman world had experienced, during a term of forty years, the ſucceſſive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus, it enjoyed an auſpicious calm of thirteen years. The provinces, relieved from the oppreſſive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended ſon, flouriſhed in peace and proſperity, under the adminiſtration of magiſtrates, who were convinced by experience, that to deſerve the love of the ſubjects, was their beſt and only method of obtaining the favour of their ſovereign. While ſome gentle reſtraints were impoſed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of proviſions, and the intereſt of money, were reduced,

[70] See the 13th Satire of Juvenal.
[71] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 119.

by

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by the paternal care of Alexander, whoſe prudent liberality, without diſtreſſing the induſtrious, ſupplied the wants and amuſements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority of the ſenate were reſtored; and every virtuous ſenator might approach the perſon of the emperor, without fear, and without a bluſh.

Alexander refuſes the name of Antoninus.

The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the diſſolute Verus, and by deſcent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honourable appellation of the ſons of Severus, was beſtowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length proſtituted to the infamy of the high prieſt of Emeſa. Alexander, though preſſed by the ſtudied, and perhaps ſincere importunity of the ſenate, nobly refuſed the borrowed luſtre of a name; whilſt in his whole conduct he laboured to reſtore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines [72].

He attempts to reform the army.

In the civil adminiſtration of Alexander, wiſdom was enforced by power, and the people, ſenſible of the public felicity, repaid their benefactor with their love and gratitude. There ſtill remained a greater, a more neceſſary, but a more difficult enterpriſe; the reformation of the military order, whoſe intereſt and temper, con-

[72] See in the Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 116, 117, the whole conteſt between Alexander and the ſenate, extracted from the journals of that aſſembly. It happened on the ſixth of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almoſt a twelvemonth, the bleſſings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honour, the ſenate waited to ſee whether Alexander would not aſſume it as a family name.

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firmed by long impunity, rendered them impatient of the reſtraints of diſcipline, and careleſs of the bleſſings of public tranquillity. In the execution of his deſign the emperor affected to diſplay his love, and to conceal his fear, of the army. The moſt rigid œconomy in every other branch of the adminiſtration, ſupplied a fund of gold and ſilver for the ordinary pay and the extraordinary rewards of the troops. In their marches he relaxed the ſevere obligation of carrying ſeventeen days' proviſion on their ſhoulders. Ample magazines were formed along the public roads, and as ſoon as they entered the enemy's country, a numerous train of mules and camels waited on their haughty lazineſs. As Alexander deſpaired of correcting the luxury of his ſoldiers, he attempted at leaſt to direct it to objects of martial pomp and ornament, fine horſes, ſplendid armour, and ſhield enriched with ſilver and gold. He ſhared whatever fatigues he was obliged to impoſe, viſited in perſon the ſick and wounded, preſerved an exact regiſter of their ſervices and his own gratitude, and expreſſed, on every occaſion, the warmeſt regard for a body of men, whoſe welfare, as he affected to declare, was ſo cloſely connected with that of the ſtate [73]. By the moſt gentle arts he laboured to inſpire the fierce multitude with a ſenſe of duty, and to reſtore at leaſt a faint image of that diſcipline to which the Romans owed their empire over ſo

[73] It was a favourite ſaying of the emperor's, Se milites magis ſervare, quam ſeipſum; quod ſalus publica in his eſſet. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 130.

many other nations, as warlike and more powerful than themſelves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation ſerved only to inflame the ills it was meant to cure.

Seditions of the Prætorian guards, and murder of Ulpian.

The Prætorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil, whom they had ſaved from a tyrant's fury, and placed on the Imperial throne. That amiable prince was ſenſible of the obligation; but as his gratitude was reſtrained within the limits of reaſon and juſtice, they ſoon were more diſſatisfied with the virtues of Alexander, than they had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their præfect, the wiſe Ulpian, was the friend of the laws and of the people; he was conſidered as the enemy of the ſoldiers, and to his pernicious counſels every ſcheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their diſcontent into a furious mutiny; and a civil war raged, during three days, in Rome, whilſt the life of that excellent miniſter was defended by the grateful people. Terrified, at length, by the ſight of ſome houſes in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a ſigh, and left the virtuous but unfortunate Ulpian to his fate. He was purſued into the Imperial palace, and maſſacred at the feet of his maſter, who vainly ſtrove to cover him with the purple, and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable ſoldiers. Such was the deplorable weakneſs of government, that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered friend

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friend and his inſulted dignity, without ſtooping to the arts of patience and diſſimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome, by the honourable employment of præfect of Egypt; from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when, at length, his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and abſence, Alexander ventured to inflict the tardy, but deſerved puniſhment of his crimes[74]. Under the reign of a juſt and virtuous prince, the tyranny of the army threatened with inſtant death his moſt faithful miniſters, who were ſuſpected of an intention to correct their intolerable diſorders.

Danger of Dion Caſſius.

The hiſtorian Dion Caſſius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the ſpirit of ancient diſcipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cauſe of military licence, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, inſtead of yielding to their ſeditious clamours, ſhewed a juſt ſenſe of his merit and ſervices, by appointing him his colleague in the conſulſhip, and defraying from his own treaſury the expence of that vain dignity: but as it was juſtly apprehended, that if the ſoldiers beheld him with the enſigns of his office, they would revenge the inſult in his blood, the nominal firſt magiſtrate of the ſtate retired, by the emperor's advice, from

74 Though the author of the life of Alexander (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 132.) mentions the ſedition raiſed againſt Ulpian by the ſoldiers, he conceals the cataſtrophe, as it might diſcover a weakneſs in the adminiſtration of his hero. From this deſigned omiſſion, we may judge of the weight and candour of that author.

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the city, and ſpent the greateſt part of his conſulſhip at his villas in Campania [75]. CHAP. VI.

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the inſolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the guards, and defended their prerogative of licentiouſneſs with the ſame furious obſtinacy. The adminiſtration of Alexander was an unavailing ſtruggle againſt the corruption of his age. In Illyricum, in Mauritania, in Armenia, in Meſopotamia, in Germany, freſh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was inſulted, and his life at laſt ſacrificed to the fierce diſcontents of the army [76]. One particular fact well deſerves to be recorded, as it illuſtrates the manners of the troops, and exhibits a ſingular inſtance of their return to a ſenſe of duty and obedience. Whilſt the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Perſian expedition, the particulars of which we ſhall hereafter relate, the puniſhment of ſome ſoldiers, who had been diſcovered in the baths of women, excited a ſedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander aſcended his tribunal, and with a modeſt firmneſs repreſented to the armed multitude, the abſolute neceſſity as well as his inflexible reſolution of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predeceſſor, and of maintaining the diſcipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamours interrupted his mild ex-

Tumults of the legions.

Firmneſs of the emperor.

75 For an account of Ulpian's fate and his own danger, ſee the mutilated concluſion of Dion's Hiſtory, l. lxxx. p. 1371.

76 Annot. Reimar. ad Dion Caſſius, l. lxxx. p. 1369.

poſtulation.

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poſtulation. "Reſerve your ſhouts," ſaid the undaunted emperor, "till you take the field "againſt the Perſians, the Germans, and the "Sarmatians. Be ſilent in the preſence of your "ſovereign and benefactor, who beſtows upon "you the corn, the clothing, and the money of "the provinces. Be ſilent, or I ſhall no longer "ſtyle you ſoldiers, but *citizens*[77], if thoſe in-"deed who diſclaim the laws of Rome deſerve "to be ranked among the meaneſt of the peo-"ple." His menaces inflamed the fury of the legion, and their brandiſhed arms already threatened his perſon. "Your courage," reſumed the intrepid Alexander, "would be more nobly diſ-"played in the field of battle; *me* you may de-"ſtroy, you cannot intimidate; and the ſevere "juſtice of the republic would puniſh your crime, "and revenge my death." The legion ſtill perſiſted in clamorous ſedition, when the emperor pronounced, with a loud voice, the deciſive ſentence, "*Citizens!* lay down your arms, and de-"part in peace to your reſpective habitations." The tempeſt was inſtantly appeaſed; the ſoldiers, filled with grief and ſhame, ſilently confeſſed the juſtice of their puniſhment and the power of diſcipline, yielded up their arms and military enſigns, and retired in confuſion, not to their camp, but to the ſeveral inns of the city. Alexander enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying ſpec-

77 Julius Cæſar had appeaſed a ſedition with the ſame word *Quirites*; which, thus oppoſed to *Soldiers*, was uſed in a ſenſe of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the leſs honourable condition of mere citizens. Tacit. Annal. i. 43.

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tacle of their repentance; nor did he reſtore them to their former rank in the army, till he had puniſhed with death thoſe tribunes whoſe connivance had occaſioned the mutiny. The grateful legion ſerved the emperor, whilſt living, and revenged him when dead[78].

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The reſolutions of the multitude generally depend on a moment; and the caprice of paſſion might equally determine the ſeditious legion to lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to plunge them into his breaſt. Perhaps, if the ſingular tranſaction had been inveſtigated by the penetration of a philoſopher, we ſhould diſcover the ſecret cauſes which on that occaſion authorized the boldneſs of the prince, and commanded the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if it had been related by a judicious hiſtorian, we ſhould find this action, worthy of Cæſar himſelf, reduced nearer to the level of probability and the common ſtandard of the character of Alexander Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince ſeem to have been inadequate to the difficulties of his ſituation, the firmneſs of his conduct inferior to the purity of his intentions. His virtues, as well as the vices of Elagabalus, contracted a tincture of weakneſs and effeminacy from the ſoft climate of Syria, of which he was a native; though he bluſhed at his foreign origin, and liſtened with a vain complacency to the flattering genealogiſts, who derived his race from

Defects of his reign and character.

[78] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 132.

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the ancient ſtock of Roman nobility [79]. The pride and avarice of his mother caſt a ſhade on the glories of his reign; and by exacting from his riper years the ſame dutiful obedience which ſhe had juſtly claimed from his unexperienced youth, Mamæa expoſed to public ridicule both her ſon's character and her own [80]. The fatigues of the Perſian war irritated the military diſcontent; the unſucceſsful event degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and even as a ſoldier. Every cauſe prepared, and every circumſtance haſtened, a revolution, which diſtracted the Roman empire with a long ſeries of inteſtine calamities.

Digreſſion on the finances of the empire.

The diſſolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occaſioned by his death, and the new maxims of policy introduced by the houſe of Severus, had all contributed to increaſe the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the faint image of laws and liberty that was ſtill impreſſed

79 From the Metelli. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 119. The choice was judicious. In one ſhort period of twelve years, the Metelli could reckon ſeven conſulſhips and five triumphs. See Velleius Paterculus, ii. 11. and the Faſti.

80 The life of Alexander, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropædia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is rational and moderate, conſiſtent with the general hiſtory of the age; and, in ſome of the moſt invidious particulars, confirmed by the deciſive fragments of Dion. Yet from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuſe Herodian, and copy the Auguſtan Hiſtory. See Meſſ. de Tillemont and Wotton. From the oppoſite prejudice, the emperor Julian (in Cæſarib. p. 315.) dwells with a viſible ſatisfaction on the effeminate weakneſs of the *Syrian*, and the ridiculous avarice of his mother.

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on the minds of the Romans. This internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavoured to explain with ſome degree of order and perſpicuity. The perſonal characters of the emperors, their victories, laws, follies, and fortunes, can intereſt us no farther than as they are connected with the general hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the monarchy. Our conſtant attention to that great object will not ſuffer us to overlook a moſt important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the free inhabitants of the empire the name and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the ſentiments of a generous mind; it was the ſordid reſult of avarice, and will naturally be illuſtrated by ſome obſervations on the finances of that ſtate, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus. CHAP. VI.

Eſtabliſhment,

The ſiege of Veii in Tuſcany, the firſt conſiderable enterpriſe of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year, much leſs by the ſtrength of the place than by the unſkilfulneſs of the beſiegers. The unaccuſtomed hardſhips of ſo many winter campaigns, at the diſtance of near twenty miles from home[81], required more than common encouragements; and the ſenate wiſely prevented

[81] According to the more accurate Dionyſius, the city itſelf was only an hundred ſtadia, or twelve miles and a half from Rome; though ſome out-poſts might be advanced farther on the ſide of Etruria. Nardini, in a profeſſed treatiſe, has combated the popular opinion and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Civita Caſtellana, to a little ſpot called Iſola, in the midway between Rome and the lake Bracciano.

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the clamours of the people, by the inſtitution of a regular pay for the ſoldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, aſſeſſed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens[81]. During more than two hundred years after the conqueſt of Veii, the victories of the republic added leſs to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The ſtates of Italy paid their tribute in military ſervice only, and the vaſt force both by ſea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expence of the Romans themſelves. That high-ſpirited people (ſuch is often the generous enthuſiaſm of freedom) cheerfully ſubmitted to the moſt exceſſive but voluntary burdens, in the juſt confidence that they ſhould ſpeedily enjoy the rich harveſt of their labours. Their expectations were not diſappointed. In the courſe of a few years, the riches of Syracuſe, of Carthage, of Macedonia, and of Aſia, were brought in triumph to Rome. The treaſures of Perſeus alone amounted to near two millions ſterling, and the Roman people, the ſovereign of ſo many nations, was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes[82]. The increaſing revenue of the provinces was found ſufficient to defray the ordinary eſtabliſhment of war and government, and the ſuperfluous maſs of gold and ſilver was depoſited in the temple of

and abolition of the tribute on Roman citizens.

[81] See the 4th and 5th books of Livy. In the Roman Cenſus, property, power, and taxation, were commenſurate with each other.

[82] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. Cicero de Offic. ii. 22. Plutarch. in P. Æmil. p. 275.

Saturn,

Saturn, and reſerved for any unforeſeen emergency of the ſtate [84]. CHAP. VI.

Tributes of the provinces

Hiſtory has never perhaps ſuffered a greater or more irreparable injury, than in the loſs of the curious regiſter bequeathed by Auguſtus to the ſenate, in which that experienced prince ſo accurately balanced the revenues and expences of the Roman empire [85]. Deprived of this clear and comprehenſive eſtimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from ſuch of the ancients as have accidentally turned aſide from the ſplendid to the more uſeful parts of hiſtory. We are informed that, by the conqueſts of Pompey, the tributes of Aſia were raiſed from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms; or about four millions and a half ſterling [86]. Under the laſt and moſt indolent of the Ptolemies, the revenue of Egypt is ſaid to have amounted to twelve thouſand five hundred talents; a ſum equivalent to more than two millions and a half of our money, but which was afterwards conſiderably improved by the more exact œconomy of the Romans, and the increaſe of the trade of Æthiopia and India [87]. Gaul was enriched by rapine, as Egypt was by commerce, and the tributes of thoſe two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to

of Aſia,

of Egypt,

of Gaul,

[84] See a fine deſcription of this accumulated wealth of ages, in Lucan's Pharſ. l. iii. v. 155, &c.

[85] Tacit. in Annal. i. 11. It ſeems to have exiſted in the time of Appian.

[86] Plutarch. in Pompeio, p. 642. [87] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 798.

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of Africa,

each other in value[88]. The ten thouſand Euboic or Phœnician talents, about four millions ſterling[89], which vanquiſhed Carthage was condemned to pay within the term of fifty years, were a ſlight acknowledgment of the ſuperiority of Rome[90], and cannot bear the leaſt proportion with the taxes afterwards raiſed both on the lands and on the perſons of the inhabitants, when the fertile coaſt of Africa was reduced into a province[91].

of Spain,

Spain, by a very ſingular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The diſcovery of the rich weſtern continent by the Phœnicians, and the oppreſſion of the ſimple natives, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of ſtrangers, form an exact type of the more recent hiſtory of Spaniſh America[92]. The Phœnicians were acquainted only with the ſea-coaſt of Spain; avarice, as well as ambition, carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almoſt every part of the ſoil was found pregnant with copper, ſilver, and gold. Mention is made of a mine near Carthagena which yielded every day twenty-five

88 Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 39. He ſeems to give the preference to the revenue of Gaul.

89 The Euboic, the Phœnician, and the Alexandrian talents were double in weight to the Attic. See Hooper of ancient weights and meaſures, p. iv. c. 5. It is very probable, that the ſame talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage.

90 Polyb. l. xv. c. 2.

91 Appian in Punicis, p. 84.

92 Diodorus Siculus, l. v. Cadiz was built by the Phœnicians a little more than a thouſand years before Chriſt. See Vell. Paterc. i. 2.

thouſand

thouſand drachms of ſilver, or about three hundred thouſand pounds a year[93]. Twenty thouſand pound weight of gold was annually received from the provinces of Aſturia, Gallicia, and Luſitania[94]. CHAP VI.

of the iſle of Gyarus.

We want both leiſure and materials to purſue this curious inquiry through the many potent ſtates that were annihilated in the Roman empire. Some notion, however, may be formed of the revenue of the provinces where conſiderable wealth had been depoſited by nature, or collected by man, if we obſerve the ſevere attention that was directed to the abodes of ſolitude and ſterility. Auguſtus once received a petition from the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that they might be relieved from one-third of their exceſſive impoſitions. Their whole tax amounted indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty drachms, or about five pounds: but Gyarus was a little iſland, or rather a rock, of the Ægean ſea, deſtitute of freſh water and every neceſſary of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched fiſhermen[95].

Amount of the revenue.

From the faint glimmerings of ſuch doubtful and ſcattered lights we ſhould be inclined to believe, 1ſt, That (with every fair allowance for

[93] Strabo, l. iii. p. 148.

[94] Plin. Hiſt. Natur. l. xxxiii. c. 3. He mentions likewiſe a ſilver mine in Dalmatia, that yielded every day fifty pounds to the ſtate.

[95] Strabo, l. x. p. 485. Tacit. Annal. iii. 69. and iv. 30. See in Tournefort (Voyages au Levant, Lettre viii.) a very lively picture of the actual miſery of Gyarus.

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the difference of times and circumſtances) the general income of the Roman provinces could ſeldom amount to leſs than fifteen or twenty millions of our money[96]; and, 2dly, That ſo ample a revenue muſt have been fully adequate to all the expences of the moderate government inſtituted by Auguſtus, whoſe court was the modeſt family of a private ſenator, and whoſe military eſtabliſhment was calculated for the defence of the frontiers, without any aſpiring views of conqueſt, or any ſerious apprehenſion of a foreign invaſion.

Taxes on Roman citizens inſtituted by Auguſtus.

Notwithſtanding the ſeeming probability of both theſe concluſions, the latter of them at leaſt is poſitively diſowned by the language and conduct of Auguſtus. It is not eaſy to determine whether, on this occaſion, he acted as the common father of the Roman world, or as the oppreſſor of liberty; whether he wiſhed to relieve the provinces, or to impoveriſh the ſenate and the equeſtrian order. But no ſooner had he aſſumed the reins of government, than he frequently intimated the inſufficiency of the tributes, and the neceſſity of throwing an equitable proportion of the public burden upon Rome and Italy. In the proſecution of this unpopular deſign, he advanced, however, by cautious and well-weighed ſteps. The introduction of cuſtoms was followed by the eſtabliſhment of an exciſe,

[96] Lipſius de magnitudine Romanâ (l. ii. c. 3.) computes the revenue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated imagination.

and

and the ſcheme of taxation was completed by an artful aſſeſſment on the real and perſonal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half. CHAP. VI.

I. In a great empire like that of Rome, a natural balance of money muſt have gradually eſtabliſhed itſelf. It has been already obſerved, that as the wealth of the provinces was attracted to the capital by the ſtrong hand of conqueſt and power; ſo a conſiderable part of it was reſtored to the induſtrious provinces by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Auguſtus and his ſucceſſors, duties were impoſed on every kind of merchandiſe, which through a thouſand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatſoever manner the law was expreſſed, it was the Roman purchaſer, and not the provincial merchant, who paid the tax[97]. The rate of the cuſtoms varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to ſuppoſe that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy; that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on thoſe of neceſſity, and that the productions raiſed or manufactured by the labour of the ſubjects of the empire, were treated with more indulgence than was ſhewn to the pernicious, or at leaſt the unpopular commerce of Arabia and The cuſtoms.

97 Tacit. Annal. xiii. 31.

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India[98]. There is ſtill extant a long but imperfect catalogue of eaſtern commodities, which about the time of Alexander Severus were ſubject to the payment of duties; cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, and the whole tribe of aromatics; a great variety of precious ſtones, among which the diamond was the moſt remarkable for its price, and the emerald for its beauty[99]: Parthian and Babylonian leather, cottons, ſilks, both raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs[100]. We may obſerve that the uſe and value of thoſe effeminate ſlaves gradually roſe with the decline of the empire.

The exciſe.

II. The exciſe, introduced by Auguſtus after the civil wars, was extremely moderate, but it was general. It ſeldom exceeded one *per cent.*; but it comprehended whatever was ſold in the markets or by public auction, from the moſt conſiderable purchaſe of lands and houſes, to thoſe minute objects which can only derive a value from their infinite multitude, and daily conſumption. Such a tax, as it affects the body of the people, has ever been the occaſion of clamour and diſcontent. An emperor well acquainted

[98] See Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. l. vi. c. 23. l. xii. c. 18.). His obſervation, that the Indian commodities were ſold at Rome at a hundred times their original price, may give us ſome notion of the produce of the cuſtoms, ſince that original price amounted to more than eight hundred thouſand pounds.

[99] The ancients were unacquainted with the art of cutting diamonds.

[100] M. Bouchaud, in his treatiſe de l'Impot chez les Romains, has tranſcribed this catalogue, from the Digeſt, and attempts to illuſtrate it by a very prolix commentary.

with

with the wants and resources of the state, was obliged to declare by a public edict, that the support of the army depended in a great measure on the produce of the excise [101].

Tax on legacies and inheritances.

III. When Augustus resolved to establish a permanent military force for the defence of his government against foreign and domestic enemies, he instituted a peculiar treasury for the pay of the soldiers, the rewards of the veterans, and the extraordinary expences of war. The ample revenue of the excise, though peculiarly appropriated to those uses, was found inadequate. To supply the deficiency, the emperor suggested a new tax of five *per cent.* on all legacies and inheritances. But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom. Their indignant murmurs were received by Augustus with his usual temper. He candidly referred the whole business to the senate, and exhorted them to provide for the public service by some other expedient of a less odious nature. They were divided and perplexed. He insinuated to them, that their obstinacy would oblige him to *propose* a general land-tax and capitation. They acquiesced in silence [102]. The new imposition on legacies and inheritances was however mitigated by some restrictions. It did not take place unless the object was of a certain value,

[101] Tacit. Annal. i. 78. Two years afterwards, the reduction of the poor kingdom of Cappadocia gave Tiberius a pretence for diminishing the excise to one half; but the relief was of very short duration.

[102] Dion Cassius, l. lv. p. 794. l. lvi. p. 825.

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moſt probably of fifty or an hundred pieces of gold [103]; nor could it be exacted from the neareſt of kin on the father's ſide [104]. When the rights of nature and poverty were thus ſecured, it ſeemed reaſonable, that a ſtranger, or a diſtant relation, who acquired an unexpected acceſſion of fortune, ſhould cheerfully reſign a twentieth part of it, for the benefit of the ſtate [105].

Suited to the laws and manners.

Such a tax, plentiful as it muſt prove in every wealthy community, was moſt happily ſuited to the ſituation of the Romans, who could frame their arbitrary wills, according to the dictates of reaſon or caprice, without any reſtraint from the modern fetters of entails and ſettlements. From various cauſes the partiality of paternal affection often loſt its influence over the ſtern patriots of the commonwealth, and the diſſolute nobles of the empire; and if the father bequeathed to his ſon the fourth part of his eſtate, he removed all ground of legal complaint [106]. But a rich childleſs old man was a domeſtic tyrant, and his power increaſed with his years and infirmities. A ſervile crowd, in which he frequently reckoned prætors and conſuls, courted his ſmiles, pampered his avarice, applauded his follies, ſerved his paſſions, and waited with impatience for his

103 The ſum is only fixed by conjecture.

104 As the Roman law ſubſiſted for many ages, the *Cognati*, or relations on the mother's ſide, were not called to the ſucceſſion. This harſh inſtitution was gradually undermined by humanity, and finally aboliſhed by Juſtinian.

105 Plin. Panegyric. c. 37.

106 See Heineccius in the Antiquit. Juris Romani, l. ii.

death,

death. The arts of attendance and flattery were formed into a moſt lucrative ſcience; thoſe who profeſſed it acquired a peculiar appellation; and the whole city, according to the lively deſcriptions of ſatire, was divided between two parties, the hunters and their game[107]. Yet, while ſo many unjuſt and extravagant wills were every day dictated by cunning, and ſubſcribed by folly, a few were the reſult of rational eſteem and virtuous gratitude. Cicero, who had ſo often defended the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens, was rewarded with legacies to the amount of an hundred and ſeventy thouſand pounds[108]; nor do the friends of the younger Pliny ſeem to have been leſs generous to that amiable orator[109]. Whatever was the motive of the teſtator, the treaſury claimed, without diſtinction, the twentieth part of his eſtate; and in the courſe of two or three generations, the whole property of the ſubject muſt have gradually paſſed through the coffers of the ſtate. CHAP. VI.

Regulations of the emperors.

In the firſt and golden years of the reign of Nero, that prince, from a deſire of popularity, and perhaps from a blind impulſe of benevolence, conceived a wiſh of aboliſhing the oppreſſion of the cuſtoms and exciſe. The wiſeſt ſenators applauded his magnanimity; but they diverted him

107 Horat. l. ii. Sat. v. Petron. c. 116, &c. Plin. l. ii. Epiſt. 20.

108 Cicero in Philipp. ii. c. 16.

109 See his epiſtles. Every ſuch will gave him an occaſion of diſplaying his reverence to the dead, and his juſtice to the living. He reconciled both, in his behaviour to a ſon who had been diſinherited by his mother (v. 1.).

from

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from the execution of a deſign, which would have diſſolved the ſtrength and reſources of the republic [110]. Had it indeed been poſſible to realize this dream of fancy, ſuch princes as Trajan and the Antonines would ſurely have embraced with ardour the glorious opportunity of conferring ſo ſignal an obligation on mankind. Satisfied, however, with alleviating the public burden, they attempted not to remove it. The mildneſs and preciſion of their laws aſcertained the rule and meaſure of taxation, and protected the ſubject of every rank againſt arbitrary interpretations, antiquated claims, and the inſolent vexation of the farmers of the revenue [111]. For it is ſomewhat ſingular that, in every age, the beſt and wiſeſt of the Roman governors perſevered in this pernicious method of collecting the principal branches at leaſt of the exciſe and cuſtoms [112].

Edict of Caracalla.

The ſentiments, and, indeed, the ſituation of Caracalla, were very different from thoſe of the Antonines. Inattentive, or rather averſe to the welfare of his people, he found himſelf under the neceſſity of gratifying the inſatiate avarice, which he had excited in the army. Of the ſeveral impoſitions introduced by Auguſtus, the twentieth on inheritances and legacies was the moſt fruitful, as well as the moſt comprehenſive. As its

[110] Tacit. Annal. xiii. 50. Eſprit des Loix, l. xii. c. 19.

[111] See Pliny's Panegyric, the Auguſtan Hiſtory, and Burman de Vectigal. paſſim.

[112] The tributes (properly ſo called) were not farmed; ſince the good princes often remitted many millions of arrears.

influ-

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influence was not confined to Rome or Italy, the produce continually increaſed with the gradual extenſion of the ROMAN CITY. The new citizens, though charged, on equal terms [113], with the payment of new taxes, which had not affected them as ſubjects, derived an ample compenſation from the rank they obtained, the privileges they acquired, and the fair proſpect of honours and fortune that was thrown open to their ambition. But the favour which implied a diſtinction was loſt in the prodigality of Caracalla, and the reluctant provincials were compelled to aſſume the vain title, and the real obligations, of Roman citizens. Nor was the rapacious ſon of Severus contented with ſuch a meaſure of taxation, as had appeared ſufficient to his moderate predeceſſors. Inſtead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all legacies and inheritances; and during his reign (for the ancient proportion was reſtored after his death) he cruſhed alike every part of the empire under the weight of his iron ſceptre [114].

The freedom of the city given to all the provincials for the purpoſe of taxation.

When all the provincials became liable to the peculiar impoſitions of Roman citizens, they ſeemed to acquire a legal exemption from the tributes which they had paid in their former condition of ſubjects. Such were not the maxims of government adopted by Caracalla and his pretended ſon. The old as well as the new taxes were, at the ſame time, levied in the provinces.

Temporary reduction of the tribute.

[113] The ſituation of the new citizens is minutely deſcribed by Pliny (Panegyric, c. 37, 38, 39.). Trajan publiſhed a law very much in their favour.

[114] Dion, l. lxxvii. p. 1295.

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It was reſerved for the virtue of Alexander to relieve them in a great meaſure from this intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the ſum exacted at the time of his acceſſion[115]. It is impoſſible to conjecture the motive that engaged him to ſpare ſo trifling a remnant of the public evil; but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again ſprang up with the moſt luxuriant growth, and in the ſucceeding age darkened the Roman world with its deadly ſhade. In the courſe of this hiſtory, we ſhall be too often ſummoned to explain the land-tax, the capitation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the uſe of the court, the army, and the capital.

Conſequences of the univerſal freedom of Rome.

As long as Rome and Italy were reſpected as the centre of government, a national ſpirit was preſerved by the ancient, and inſenſibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men who had received a liberal education, were well inſtructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had riſen, by equal ſteps, through the regular ſucceſſion of civil and military honours[116]. To their influence and example we may partly aſcribe the modeſt obedience of the legions during the two firſt centuries of the Imperial hiſtory.

[115] He who paid ten *aurei*, the uſual tribute, was charged with no more than the third part of an aureus, and proportional pieces of gold were coined by Alexander's order. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 127. with the commentary of Salmaſius.

[116] See the lives of Agricola, Veſpaſian, Trajan, Severus, and his three competitors; and indeed of all the eminent men of thoſe times.

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But when the laſt encloſure of the Roman conſtitution was trampled down by Caracalla, the ſeparation of profeſſions gradually ſucceeded to the diſtinction of ranks. The more poliſhed citizens of the internal provinces were alone qualified to act as lawyers and magiſtrates. The rougher trade of arms was abandoned to the peaſants and barbarians of the frontiers, who knew no country but their camp; no ſcience but that of war, no civil laws, and ſcarcely thoſe of military diſcipline. With bloody hands, ſavage manners, and deſperate reſolutions, they ſometimes guarded, but much oftener ſubverted, the throne of the emperors.

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The Elevation and Tyranny of Maximin.—Rebellion in Africa and Italy, under the Authority of the Senate.—Civil Wars and Seditions.—Violent Deaths of Maximin and his Son, of Maximus and Balbinus, and of the three Gordians.—Uſurpation and ſecular Games of Philip.

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The apparent ridicule

OF the various forms of government, which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy ſeems to preſent the faireſt ſcope for ridicule. Is it poſſible to relate, without an indignant ſmile, that on the father's deceaſe, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, deſcends to his infant ſon, as yet unknown to mankind and to himſelf; and that the braveſt warriors and the wiſeſt ſtateſmen, relinquiſhing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and proteſtations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint theſe obvious topics in the moſt dazzling colours, but our more ſerious thoughts will reſpect a uſeful prejudice, that eſtabliſhes a rule of ſucceſſion, independent of the paſſions of mankind; and we ſhall cheerfully acquieſce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themſelves a maſter.

and ſolid advantages of hereditary ſucceſſion.

In the cool ſhade of retirement, we may eaſily deviſe imaginary forms of government, in which

the ſceptre ſhall be conſtantly beſtowed on the moſt worthy, by the free and incorrupt ſuffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns theſe airy fabrics, and teaches us, that in a large ſociety, the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wiſeſt, or to the moſt numerous, part of the people. The army is the only order of men ſufficiently united to concur in the ſame ſentiments, and powerful enough to impoſe them on the reſt of their fellow-citizens: but the temper of ſoldiers, habituated at once to violence and to ſlavery, renders them very unfit guardians of a legal, or even a civil conſtitution. Juſtice, humanity, or political wiſdom, are qualities they are too little acquainted with in themſelves, to appreciate them in others. Valour will acquire their eſteem, and liberality will purchaſe their ſuffrage; but the firſt of theſe merits is often lodged in the moſt ſavage breaſts; the latter can only exert itſelf at the expence of the public; and both may be turned againſt the poſſeſſor of the throne, by the ambition of a daring rival. CHAP. VII.

The ſuperior prerogative of birth, when it has obtained the ſanction of time and popular opinion, is the plaineſt and leaſt invidious of all diſtinctions among mankind. The acknowledged right extinguiſhes the hopes of faction, and the conſcious ſecurity diſarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm eſtabliſhment of this idea, we owe the peaceful ſucceſſion, and mild adminiſtration, of European monarchies. To the defect of it, we muſt attribute the frequent civil wars,

Want of it in the Roman empire productive of the greateſt calamities.

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wars, through which an Aſiatic deſpot is obliged to cut his way to the throne of his fathers. Yet, even in the Eaſt, the ſphere of contention is uſually limited to the princes of the reigning houſe, and as ſoon as the more fortunate competitor has removed his brethren, by the ſword and the bow-ſtring, he no longer entertains any jealouſy of his meaner ſubjects. But the Roman empire, after the authority of the ſenate had ſunk into contempt, was a vaſt ſcene of confuſion. The royal, and even noble, families of the provinces, had long ſince been led in triumph before the car of the haughty republicans. The ancient families of Rome had ſucceſſively fallen beneath the tyranny of the Cæſars; and whilſt thoſe princes were ſhackled by the forms of a commonwealth, and diſappointed by the repeated failure of their poſterity [1], it was impoſſible that any idea of hereditary ſucceſſion ſhould have taken root in the minds of their ſubjects. The right to the throne, which none could claim from birth, every one aſſumed from merit. The daring hopes of ambition were ſet looſe from the ſalutary reſtraints of law and prejudice; and the meaneſt of mankind might, without folly, entertain a hope of being raiſed by valour and fortune to a rank in the army, in which a ſingle crime would enable him to wreſt the ſceptre of the world from his feeble and unpopular maſter. After the mur-

[1] There had been no example of three ſucceſſive generations on the throne; only three inſtances of ſons who ſucceeded their fathers. The marriages of the Cæſars (notwithſtanding the permiſſion, and the frequent practice of divorces) were generally unfruitful.

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der of Alexander Severus, and the elevation of Maximin, no emperor could think himſelf ſafe upon the throne, and every barbarian peaſant of the frontier might aſpire to that auguſt, but dangerous ſtation. CHAP. VII.

Birth and fortunes of Maximin.

About thirty-two years before that event, the emperor Severus, returning from an eaſtern expedition, halted in Thrace, to celebrate, with military games, the birth-day of his younger ſon, Geta. The country flocked in crowds to behold their ſovereign, and a young barbarian of gigantic ſtature earneſtly ſolicited, in his rude dialect, that he might be allowed to contend for the prize of wreſtling. As the pride of diſcipline would have been diſgraced in the overthrow of a Roman ſoldier by a Thracian peaſant, he was matched with the ſtouteſt followers of the camp, ſixteen of whom he ſucceſſively laid on the ground. His victory was rewarded by ſome trifling gifts, and a permiſſion to inliſt in the troops. The next day, the happy barbarian was diſtinguiſhed above a crowd of recruits, dancing and exulting after the faſhion of his country. As ſoon as he perceived that he had attracted the emperor's notice, he inſtantly ran up to his horſe, and followed him on foot, without the leaſt appearance of fatigue, in a long and rapid career. "Thra-" cian," ſaid Severus, with aſtoniſhment, "art "thou diſpoſed to wreſtle after thy race?" Moſt willingly, Sir, replied the unwearied youth; and, almoſt in a breath, overthrew ſeven of the ſtrongeſt ſoldiers in the army. A gold collar was

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the prize of his matchleſs vigour and activity, and he was immediately appointed to ſerve in the horſe-guards who always attended on the perſon of the ſovereign [2].

His military ſervice and honours.

Maximin, for that was his name, though born on the territories of the empire, deſcended from a mixed race of barbarians. His father was a Goth, and his mother of the nation of the Alani. He diſplayed, on every occaſion, a valour equal to his ſtrength; and his native fierceneſs was ſoon tempered or diſguiſed by the knowledge of the world. Under the reign of Severus and his ſon, he obtained the rank of centurion, with the favour and eſteem of both thoſe princes, the former of whom was an excellent judge of merit. Gratitude forbade Maximin to ſerve under the aſſaſſin of Caracalla. Honour taught him to decline the effeminate inſults of Elagabalus. On the acceſſion of Alexander he returned to court, and was placed by that prince in a ſtation uſeful to the ſervice and honourable to himſelf. The fourth legion, to which he was appointed tribune, ſoon became, under his care, the beſt diſciplined of the whole army. With the general applauſe of the ſoldiers, who beſtowed on their favourite hero the names of Ajax and Hercules, he was ſucceſſively promoted to the firſt military command [3]; and had not he ſtill retained too much of

[2] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 138.

[3] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 140. Herodian, l. vi. p. 223. Aurelius Victor. By comparing theſe authors, it ſhould ſeem that Maximin had the particular command of the Triballian horſe, with the general

of his ſavage origin, the emperor might perhaps have given his own ſiſter in marriage to the ſon of Maximin [4]. CHAP. VII.

Inſtead of ſecuring his fidelity, theſe favours ſerved only to inflame the ambition of the Thracian peaſant, who deemed his fortune inadequate to his merit, as long as he was conſtrained to acknowledge a ſuperior. Though a ſtranger to real wiſdom, he was not devoid of a ſelfiſh cunning, which ſhewed him that the emperor had loſt the affection of the army, and taught him to improve their diſcontent to his own advantage. It is eaſy for faction and calumny to ſhed their poiſon on the adminiſtration of the beſt of princes, and to accuſe even their virtues, by artfully confounding them with thoſe vices to which they bear the neareſt affinity. The troops liſtened with pleaſure to the emiſſaries of Maximin. They bluſhed at their own ignominious patience, which, during thirteen years, had ſupported the vexatious diſcipline impoſed by an effeminate Syrian, the timid ſlave of his mother and of the ſenate. It was time, they cried, to caſt away that uſeleſs phantom of the civil power, and to elect for their prince and general a real ſoldier, educated in camps, exerciſed in war, who would aſſert the glory, and diſtribute among his companions the treaſures of the empire. A great Conſpiracy of Maximin.

general commiſſion of diſciplining the recruits of the whole army. His biographer ought to have marked, with more care, his exploits, and the ſucceſſive ſteps of his military promotions.

4 See the original letter of Alexander Severus, Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 149.

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army was at that time assembled on the banks of the Rhine, under the command of the emperor himself, who, almost immediately after his return from the Persian war, had been obliged to march against the barbarians of Germany. The important care of training and reviewing the new levies was intrusted to Maximin. One day, as he entered the field of exercise, the troops, either from a sudden impulse or a formed conspiracy, saluted him emperor, silenced by their loud acclamations his obstinate refusal, and hastened to consummate their rebellion by the murder of Alexander Severus.

A. D. 235. March 19.

Murder of Alexander Severus.

The circumstances of his death are variously related. The writers, who suppose that he died in ignorance of the ingratitude and ambition of Maximin, affirm that, after taking a frugal repast in the sight of the army, he retired to sleep, and that, about the seventh hour of the day, a part of his own guards broke into the Imperial tent, and, with many wounds, assassinated their virtuous and unsuspecting prince [5]. If we credit another, and indeed a more probable account, Maximin was invested with the purple by a numerous detachment, at the distance of several miles from the head-quarters; and he trusted for success rather to the secret wishes, than to the

[5] Hist. August. p. 135. I have softened some of the most improbable circumstances of this wretched biographer. From this ill-worded narration, it should seem, that the prince's buffoon having accidentally entered the tent, and awakened the slumbering monarch, the fear of punishment urged him to persuade the disaffected soldiers to commit the murder.

public declarations of the great army. Alexander had sufficient time to awaken a faint sense of loyalty among his troops; but their reluctant professions of fidelity quickly vanished on the appearance of Maximin, who declared himself the friend and advocate of the military order, and was unanimously acknowledged emperor of the Romans by the applauding legions. The son of Mamæa, betrayed and deserted, withdrew into his tent, desirous at least to conceal his approaching fate from the insults of the multitude. He was soon followed by a tribune and some centurions, the ministers of death; but instead of receiving with manly resolution the inevitable stroke, his unavailing cries and entreaties disgraced the last moments of his life, and converted into contempt some portion of the just pity which his innocence and misfortunes must inspire. His mother Mamæa, whose pride and avarice he loudly accused as the cause of his ruin, perished with her son. The most faithful of his friends were sacrificed to the first fury of the soldiers. Others were reserved for the more deliberate cruelty of the usurper: and those who experienced the mildest treatment, were stripped of their employments, and ignominiously driven from the court and army [6].

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The former tyrants, Caligula and Nero, Commodus and Caracalla, were all dissolute and unexperienced youths [7], educated in the purple, and

Tyranny of Maximin.

[6] Herodian, l. vi. p. 223—227.

[7] Caligula, the eldest of the four, was only twenty-five years of age when he ascended the throne; Caracalla was twenty-three, Commodus nineteen, and Nero no more than seventeen.

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corrupted by the pride of empire, the luxury of Rome, and the perfidious voice of flattery. The cruelty of Maximin was derived from a different ſource, the fear of contempt. Though he depended on the attachment of the ſoldiers, who loved him for virtues like their own, he was conſcious that his mean and barbarian origin, his ſavage appearance, and his total ignorance of the arts and inſtitutions of civil life [8], formed a very unfavourable contraſt with the amiable manners of the unhappy Alexander. He remembered, that, in his humbler fortune, he had often waited before the door of the haughty nobles of Rome, and had been denied admittance by the inſolence of their ſlaves. He recollected too the friendſhip of a few who had relieved his poverty, and aſſiſted his riſing hopes. But thoſe who had ſpurned, and thoſe who had protected the Thracian, were guilty of the ſame crime, the knowledge of his original obſcurity. For this crime many were put to death; and by the execution of ſeveral of his benefactors, Maximin publiſhed, in characters of blood, the indelible hiſtory of his baſeneſs and ingratitude [9].

The dark and ſanguinary ſoul of the tyrant, was open to every ſuſpicion againſt thoſe among his ſubjects who were the moſt diſtinguiſhed by their birth or merit. Whenever he was alarmed

[8] It appears that he was totally ignorant of the Greek language; which, from its univerſal uſe in converſation and letters, was an eſſential part of every liberal education.

[9] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 141. Herodian, l. vii. p. 237. The latter of theſe hiſtorians has been moſt unjuſtly cenſured for ſparing the vices of Maximin.

with

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with the ſound of treaſon, his cruelty was unbounded and unrelenting. A conſpiracy againſt his life was either diſcovered or imagined, and Magnus, a conſular ſenator, was named as the principal author of it. Without a witneſs, without a trial, and without an opportunity of defence, Magnus, with four thouſand of his ſuppoſed accomplices, were put to death. Italy and the whole empire were infeſted with innumerable ſpies and informers. On the ſlighteſt accuſation, the firſt of the Roman nobles, who had governed provinces, commanded armies, and been adorned with the conſular and triumphal ornaments, were chained on the public carriages, and hurried away to the emperor's preſence. Confiſcation, exile, or ſimple death, were eſteemed uncommon inſtances of his lenity. Some of the unfortunate ſufferers he ordered to be ſewed up in the hides of ſlaughtered animals, others to be expoſed to wild beaſts, others again to be beaten to death with clubs. During the three years of his reign, he diſdained to viſit either Rome or Italy. His camp, occaſionally removed from the banks of the Rhine to thoſe of the Danube, was the ſeat of his ſtern deſpotiſm, which trampled on every principle of law and juſtice, and was ſupported by the avowed power of the ſword [10]. No man

[10] The wife of Maximin, by inſinuating wiſe counſels with female gentleneſs, ſometimes brought back the tyrant to the way of truth and humanity. See Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xiv. c. 1. where he alludes to the fact which he had more fully related under the reign of the Gordians. We may collect from the medals, that Paullina was the name of this benevolent empreſs; and from the title of *Diva*, that ſhe died before Maximin. (Valeſius ad loc. cit. Ammian.) Spanheim de U. et P. N. tom. ii. p. 300.

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of noble birth, elegant accompliſhments, or knowledge of civil buſineſs, was ſuffered near his perſon; and the court of a Roman emperor revived the idea of thoſe ancient chiefs of ſlaves and gladiators, whoſe ſavage power had left a deep impreſſion of terror and deteſtation [11].

Oppreſſion of the provinces.

As long as the cruelty of Maximin was confined to the illuſtrious ſenators, or even to the bold adventurers, who in the court or army expoſe themſelves to the caprice of fortune, the body of the people viewed their ſufferings with indifference, or perhaps with pleaſure. But the tyrant's avarice, ſtimulated by the inſatiate deſires of the ſoldiers, at length attacked the public property. Every city of the empire was poſſeſſed of an independent revenue, deſtined to purchaſe corn for the multitude, and to ſupply the expences of the games and entertainments. By a ſingle act of authority, the whole maſs of wealth was at once confiſcated for the uſe of the Imperial treaſury. The temples were ſtripped of their moſt valuable offerings of gold and ſilver, and the ſtatues of gods, heroes, and emperors, were melted down and coined into money. Theſe impious orders could not be executed without tumults and maſſacres, as in many places the people choſe rather to die in the defence of their altars, than to behold in the midſt of peace their cities expoſed to the rapine and cruelty of war. The ſoldiers themſelves, among whom this ſacrilegious plunder was diſtributed, received it with a

[11] He was compared to Spartacus and Athenio. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 141.

bluſh;

bluſh; and, hardened as they were in acts of violence, they dreaded the juſt reproaches of their friends and relations. Throughout the Roman world a general cry of indignation was heard, imploring vengeance on the common enemy of human kind; and at length, by an act of private oppreſſion, a peaceful and unarmed province was driven into rebellion againſt him [12].

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Revolt in Africa. A.D. 237. April.

The procurator of Africa was a ſervant worthy of ſuch a maſter, who conſidered the fines and confiſcations of the rich as one of the moſt fruitful branches of the Imperial revenue. An iniquitous ſentence had been pronounced againſt ſome opulent youths of that country, the execution of which would have ſtripped them of far the greater part of their patrimony. In this extremity, a reſolution that muſt either complete or prevent their ruin, was dictated by deſpair. A reſpite of three days, obtained with difficulty from the rapacious treaſurer, was employed in collecting from their eſtates a great number of ſlaves and peaſants, blindly devoted to the commands of their lords, and armed with the ruſtic weapons of clubs and axes. The leaders of the conſpiracy, as they were admitted to the audience of the procurator, ſtabbed him with the daggers concealed under their garments, and, by the aſſiſtance of their tumultuary train, ſeized on the little town of Thyſdrus [13], and erected the ſtandard

[12] Herodian, l. vii. p. 238. Zoſim. l. i. p. 15.

[13] In the fertile territory of Byzacium, one hundred and fifty miles to the ſouth of Carthage. This city was decorated, probably by

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ard of rebellion againſt the ſovereign of the Roman empire. They reſted their hopes on the hatred of mankind againſt Maximin, and they judiciouſly reſolved to oppoſe to that deteſted tyrant, an emperor whoſe mild virtues had already acquired the love and eſteem of the Romans, and whoſe authority over the province would give weight and ſtability to the enterpriſe. Gordianus, their proconſul, and the object of their choice, refuſed, with unfeigned reluctance, the dangerous honour, and begged with tears, that they would ſuffer him to terminate in peace a long and innocent life, without ſtaining his feeble age with civil blood. Their menaces compelled him to accept the Imperial purple, his only refuge indeed againſt the jealous cruelty of Maximin; ſince, according to the reaſoning of tyrants, thoſe who have been eſteemed worthy of the throne deſerve death, and thoſe who deliberate have already rebelled [14].

Character and elevation of the two Gordians.

The family of Gordianus was one of the moſt illuſtrious of the Roman ſenate. On the father's ſide, he was deſcended from the Gracchi; on his mother's, from the emperor Trajan. A great eſtate enabled him to ſupport the dignity of his birth, and, in the enjoyment of it, he diſplayed an elegant taſte, and beneficent diſpoſition. The palace in Rome, formerly inhabited by the great Pompey, had been, during

by the Gordians, with the title of colony, and with a fine amphitheatre, which is ſtill in a very perfect ſtate. See Itinerar. Weſſeling, p. 59. and Shaw's Travels, p. 117.

[14] Herodian, l. vii. p. 239. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 153.

ſeveral

ſeveral generations, in the poſſeſſion of Gordian's family [15]. It was diſtinguiſhed by ancient trophies of naval victories, and decorated with the works of modern painting. His villa on the road to Prænesſte, was celebrated for baths of ſingular beauty and extent, for three ſtately rooms of an hundred feet in length, and for a magnificent portico, ſupported by two hundred columns of the four moſt curious and coſtly ſorts of marble [16]. The public ſhows exhibited at his expence, and in which the people were entertained with many hundreds of wild beaſts and gladiators [17], ſeem to ſurpaſs the fortune of a ſubject; and whilſt the liberality of other magiſtrates was confined to a few ſolemn feſtivals in Rome, the magnificence of Gordian was repeated, when he was ædile, every month in the year, and extended, during his conſulſhip, to the principal

[15] Hiſt. Aug. p. 152. The celebrated houſe of Pompey *in carinis* was uſurped by Marc Antony, and conſequently became, after the Triumvir's death, a part of the Imperial domain. The emperor Trajan allowed and even encouraged the rich ſenators to purchaſe thoſe magnificent and uſeleſs places (Plin. Panegyric. c. 50.); and it may ſeem probable, that, on this occaſion, Pompey's houſe came into the poſſeſſion of Gordian's great grandfather.

[16] The Claudian, the Numidian, the Caryſtian, and the Synnadian. The colours of Roman marbles have been faintly deſcribed and imperfectly diſtinguiſhed. It appears, however, that the Caryſtian was a ſea-green, and that the marble of Synnada was white mixed with oval ſpots of purple. See Salmaſius ad Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 164.

[17] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 151, 152. He ſometimes gave five hundred pair of Gladiators, never leſs than one hundred and fifty. He once gave for the uſe of the Circus one hundred Sicilian, and as many Cappadocian horſes. The animals deſigned for hunting, were chiefly bears, boars, bulls, ſtags, elks, wild aſſes, &c. Elephants and lions ſeem to have been appropriated to Imperial magnificence.

cities

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cities of Italy. He was twice elevated to the laſt mentioned dignity, by Caracalla and by Alexander; for he poſſeſſed the uncommon talent of acquiring the eſteem of virtuous princes, without alarming the jealouſy of tyrants. His long life was innocently ſpent in the ſtudy of letters and the peaceful honours of Rome; and, till he was named proconſul of Africa by the voice of the ſenate and the approbation of Alexander [18], he appears prudently to have declined the command of armies and the government of provinces. As long as that emperor lived, Africa was happy under the adminiſtration of his worthy repreſentative; after the barbarous Maximin had uſurped the throne, Gordianus alleviated the miſeries which he was unable to prevent. When he reluctantly accepted the purple, he was above fourſcore years old; a laſt and valuable remains of the happy age of the Antonines, whoſe virtues he revived in his own conduct, and celebrated in an elegant poem of thirty books. With the venerable proconſul, his ſon, who had accompanied him into Africa as his lieutenant, was likewiſe declared emperor. His manners were leſs pure, but his character was equally amiable with that of his father. Twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of ſixty-two thouſand volumes, atteſted the variety of his inclinations; and from the productions which he left behind

[18] See the original letter, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 152, which at once ſhews Alexander's reſpect for the authority of the ſenate, and his eſteem for the proconſul appointed by that aſſembly.

him,

him, it appears that the former as well as the latter were designed for use rather than for ostentation [19]. The Roman people acknowledged in the features of the younger Gordian the resemblance of Scipio Africanus, recollected with pleasure that his mother was the grand-daughter of Antoninus Pius, and rested the public hope on those latent virtues which had hitherto, as they fondly imagined, lain concealed in the luxurious indolence of a private life.

They solicit the confirmation of their authority.

As soon as the Gordians had appeased the first tumult of a popular election, they removed their court to Carthage. They were received with the acclamations of the Africans, who honoured their virtues, and who, since the visit of Hadrian, had never beheld the majesty of a Roman emperor. But these vain acclamations neither strengthened nor confirmed the title of the Gordians. They were induced by principle, as well as interest, to solicit the approbation of the senate; and a deputation of the noblest provincials was sent, without delay, to Rome, to relate and justify the conduct of their countrymen, who, having long suffered with patience, were at length resolved to act with vigour. The letters of the new princes were modest and respectful, excusing the necessity which had obliged them to accept the Imperial title; but submitting their election

19 By each of his concubines, the younger Gordian left three or four children. His literary productions, though less numerous, were by no means contemptible.

and

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and their fate to the ſupreme judgment of the ſenate[20].

The ſenate ratifies their election of the Gordians;

The inclinations of the ſenate were neither doubtful nor divided. The birth and noble alliances of the Gordians had intimately connected them with the moſt illuſtrious houſes of Rome. Their fortune had created many dependants in that aſſembly, their merit had acquired many friends. Their mild adminiſtration opened the flattering proſpect of the reſtoration, not only of the civil but even of the republican government. The terror of military violence, which had firſt obliged the ſenate to forget the murder of Alexander, and to ratify the election of a barbarian peaſant[21], now produced a contrary effect, and provoked them to aſſert the injured rights of freedom and humanity. The hatred of Maximin towards the ſenate was declared and implacable; the tameſt ſubmiſſion had not appeaſed his fury, the moſt cautious innocence would not remove his ſuſpicions; and even the care of their own ſafety urged them to ſhare the fortune of an enterpriſe, of which (if unſucceſsful) they were ſure to be the firſt victims. Theſe conſiderations, and perhaps others of a more private nature, were debated in a previous conference of the conſuls and the magiſtrates. As ſoon as their reſolution was decided, they convoked in the temple of Caſtor the whole body of the ſenate,

[20] Herodian, l. vii. p. 243. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 144.

[21] Quod tamen patres dum periculoſum exiſtimant; inermes armato reſiſtere approbaverunt. *Aurelius Victor.*

according to an ancient form of ſecrecy[22], calculated to awaken their attention, and to conceal their decrees. "Conſcript fathers," ſaid the conſul Syllanus, "the two Gordians, both of "conſular dignity, the one your proconſul, the "other your lieutenant, have been declared em-"perors by the general conſent of Africa. Let "us return thanks," he boldly continued, "to "the youth of Thyſdrus; let us return thanks "to the faithful people of Carthage, our gene-"rous deliverers from an horrid monſter—Why "do you hear me thus coolly, thus timidly? "Why do you caſt thoſe anxious looks on each "other? why heſitate? Maximin is a public "enemy! may his enmity ſoon expire with him, "and may we long enjoy the prudence and feli-"city of Gordian the father, the valour and con-"ſtancy of Gordian the ſon[23]!" The noble ardour of the conſul revived the languid ſpirit of the ſenate. By an unanimous decree the election of the Gordians was ratified, Maximin, his ſon, and his adherents were pronounced enemies of their country, and liberal rewards were offered to whoſoever had the courage and good fortune to deſtroy them.

and declares Maximin a public enemy.

During the emperor's abſence, a detachment of the Prætorian guards remained at Rome, to

Aſſumes the command of Rome and Italy,

[22] Even the ſervants of the houſe, the ſcribes, &c. were excluded, and their office was filled by the ſenators themſelves. We are obliged to the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 159, for preſerving this curious example of the old diſcipline of the commonwealth.

[23] This ſpirited ſpeech, tranſlated from the Auguſtan hiſtorian, p. 156, ſeems tranſcribed by him from the original regiſters of the ſenate.

protect,

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protect, or rather to command the capital. The præfect Vitalianus had ſignalized his fidelity to Maximin, by the alacrity with which he had obeyed, and even prevented, the cruel mandates of the tyrant. His death alone could reſcue the authority of the ſenate and the lives of the ſenators, from a ſtate of danger and ſuſpence. Before their reſolves had tranſpired, a quæſtor and ſome tribunes were commiſſioned to take his devoted life. They executed the order with equal boldneſs and ſucceſs; and, with their bloody daggers in their hands, ran through the ſtreets, proclaiming to the people and the ſoldiers, the news of the happy revolution. The enthuſiaſm of liberty was ſeconded by the promiſe of a large donative, in lands and money; the ſtatues of Maximin were thrown down; the capital of the empire acknowledged, with tranſport, the authority of the two Gordians and the ſenate[24]; and the example of Rome was followed by the reſt of Italy.

and prepares for a civil war.

A new ſpirit had ariſen in that aſſembly, whoſe long patience had been inſulted by wanton deſpotiſm and military licence. The ſenate aſſumed the reins of government, and, with a calm intrepidity, prepared to vindicate by arms the cauſe of freedom. Among the conſular ſenators recommended by their merit and ſervices to the favour of the emperor Alexander, it was eaſy to ſelect twenty, not unequal to the command of an army, and the conduct of a war. To theſe

[24] Herodian, l. vii. p. 244.

was

was the defence of Italy intruſted. Each was appointed to act in his reſpective department, authorized to enrol and diſcipline the Italian youth; and inſtructed to fortify the ports and highways, againſt the impending invaſion of Maximin. A number of deputies, choſen from the moſt illuſtrious of the ſenatorian and equeſtrian orders, were diſpatched at the ſame time to the governors of the ſeveral provinces, earneſtly conjuring them to fly to the aſſiſtance of their country, and to remind the nations of their ancient ties of friendſhip with the Roman ſenate and people. The general reſpect with which theſe deputies were received, and the zeal of Italy and the provinces in favour of the ſenate, ſufficiently prove that the ſubjects of Maximin were reduced to that uncommon diſtreſs, in which the body of the people has more to fear from oppreſſion than from reſiſtance. The conſciouſneſs of that melancholy truth, inſpires a degree of perſevering fury, ſeldom to be found in thoſe civil wars which are artificially ſupported for the benefit of a few factious and deſigning leaders [25].

Defeat and death of the two Gordians. A.D. 237. 3d July.

For while the cauſe of the Gordians was embraced with ſuch diffuſive ardour, the Gordians themſelves were no more. The feeble court of Carthage was alarmed with the rapid approach of Capelianus, governor of Mauritania, who, with a ſmall band of veterans, and a fierce hoſt of bar-

[25] Herodian, l. vii. p. 247. l. viii. p. 277. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 156—158.

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barians, attacked a faithful, but unwarlike province. The younger Gordian ſallied out to meet the enemy at the head of a few guards, and a numerous undiſciplined multitude, educated in the peaceful luxury of Carthage. His uſeleſs valour ſerved only to procure him an honourable death in the field of battle. His aged father, whoſe reign had not exceeded thirty-ſix days, put an end to his life on the firſt news of the defeat. Carthage, deſtitute of defence, opened her gates to the conqueror, and Africa was expoſed to the rapacious cruelty of a ſlave, obliged to ſatisfy his unrelenting maſter with a large account of blood and treaſure [26].

Election of Maximus and Balbinus by the ſenate, 9th July.

The fate of the Gordians filled Rome with juſt, but unexpected terror. The ſenate convoked in the temple of Concord, affected to tranſact the common buſineſs of the day; and ſeemed to decline, with trembling anxiety, the conſideration of their own, and the public danger. A ſilent conſternation prevailed on the aſſembly, till a ſenator, of the name and family of Trajan, awakened his brethren from their fatal lethargy. He repreſented to them, that the choice of cautious dilatory meaſures had been long ſince out of their power; that Maximin, implacable by nature,

[26] Herodian, l. vii. p. 254. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 150—160. We may obſerve, that one month and ſix days, for the reign of Gordian, is a juſt correction of Caſaubon and Panvinius, inſtead of the abſurd reading of one year and ſix months. See Commentar. p. 193. Zoſimus relates, l. i. p. 17. that the two Gordians periſhed by a tempeſt in the midſt of their navigation. A ſtrange ignorance of hiſtory, or a ſtrange abuſe of metaphors!

and

and exaſperated by injuries, was advancing to- CHAP. VII.
wards Italy, at the head of the military force of the empire; and that their only remaining alternative, was either to meet him bravely in the field, or tamely to expect the tortures and ignominious death reſerved for unſucceſsful rebellion. "We have loſt," continued he, "two excellent "princes; but unleſs we deſert ourſelves, the "hopes of the republic have not periſhed with "the Gordians. Many are the ſenators, whoſe "virtues have deſerved, and whoſe abilities "would ſuſtain, the Imperial dignity. Let us "elect two emperors, one of whom may con- "duct the war againſt the public enemy, whilſt "his colleague remains at Rome to direct the "civil adminiſtration. I cheerfully expoſe myſelf "to the danger and envy of the nomination, "and give my vote in favour of Maximus and "Balbinus. Ratify my choice, conſcript fathers, "or appoint, in their place, others more worthy "of the empire." The general apprehenſion ſilenced the whiſpers of jealouſy; the merit of the candidates was univerſally acknowledged; and the houſe reſounded with the ſincere acclamations, of "long life and victory to the emperors "Maximus and Balbinus. You are happy in the "judgment of the ſenate; may the republic be "happy under your adminiſtration [27]!"

[27] See the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 166, from the regiſters of the ſenate; the date is confeſſedly faulty, but the coincidence of the Apollinarian games enables us to correct it.

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Their characters.

The virtues and the reputation of the new emperors juſtified the moſt ſanguine hopes of the Romans. The various nature of their talents ſeemed to appropriate to each his peculiar department of peace and war, without leaving room for jealous emulation. Balbinus was an admired orator, a poet of diſtinguiſhed fame, and a wiſe magiſtrate, who had exerciſed with innocence and applauſe the civil juriſdiction in almoſt all the interior provinces of the empire. His birth was noble[28], his fortune affluent, his manners liberal and affable. In him the love of pleaſure was corrected by a ſenſe of dignity, nor had the habits of eaſe deprived him of a capacity for buſineſs. The mind of Maximus was formed in a rougher mould. By his valour and abilities he had raiſed himſelf from the meaneſt origin to the firſt employments of the ſtate and army. His victories over the Sarmatians and the Germans, the auſterity of his life, and the rigid impartiality of his juſtice, whilſt he was Præfect of the city, commanded the eſteem of a people, whoſe affections were engaged in favour of the more amiable Balbinus. The two colleagues had both been

[28] He was deſcended from Cornelius Balbus, a noble Spaniard, and the adopted ſon of Theophanes the Greek hiſtorian. Balbus obtained the freedom of Rome by the favour of Pompey, and preſerved it by the eloquence of Cicero (ſee Orat. pro Cornel. Balbo). The friendſhip of Cæſar (to whom he rendered the moſt important ſecret ſervices in the civil war) raiſed him to the conſulſhip and the pontificate, honours never yet poſſeſſed by a ſtranger. The nephew of this Balbus triumphed over the Garamantes. See Dictionnaire de Bayle, au mot *Balbus*, where he diſtinguiſhes the ſeveral perſons of that name, and rectifies, with his uſual accuracy, the miſtakes of former writers concerning them.

conſuls

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conſuls (Balbinus had twice enjoyed that honourable office), both had been named among the twenty lieutenants of the ſenate; and ſince the one was ſixty and the other ſeventy-four years old[29], they had both attained the full maturity of age and experience.

Tumult at Rome. The younger Gordian is declared Cæſar.

After the ſenate had conferred on Maximus and Balbinus an equal portion of the conſular and tribunitian power, the title of Fathers of their country, and the joint office of Supreme Pontiff, they aſcended to the Capitol, to return thanks to the gods, protectors of Rome[30]. The ſolemn rites of ſacrifice were diſturbed by a ſedition of the people. The licentious multitude neither loved the rigid Maximus, nor did they ſufficiently fear the mild and humane Balbinus. Their increaſing numbers ſurrounded the temple of Jupiter; with obſtinate clamours they aſſerted their inherent right of conſenting to the election of their ſovereign; and demanded, with an apparent moderation, that, beſides the two emperors choſen by the ſenate, a third ſhould be added of the family of the Gordians, as a juſt return of gratitude to thoſe princes who had ſacrificed their lives for the republic. At the head of the city-guards, and the youth of the equeſtrian

29 Zonaras, l. xii. p. 622. But little dependence is to be had on the authority of a modern Greek, ſo groſsly ignorant of the hiſtory of the third century, that he creates ſeveral imaginary emperors, and confounds thoſe who really exiſted.

30 Herodian, l. vii. p. 256, ſuppoſes that the ſenate was at firſt convoked in the Capitol, and is very eloquent on the occaſion. The Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 116, ſeems much more authentic.

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order, Maximus and Balbinus attempted to cut their way through the ſeditious multitude. The multitude, armed with ſticks and ſtones, drove them back into the Capitol. It is prudent to yield when the conteſt, whatever may be the iſſue of it, muſt be fatal to both parties. A boy, only thirteen years of age, the grandſon of the elder, and nephew of the younger, Gordian, was produced to the people, inveſted with the ornaments and title of Cæſar. The tumult was appeaſed by this eaſy condeſcenſion; and the two emperors, as ſoon as they had been peaceably acknowledged in Rome, prepared to defend Italy againſt the common enemy.

Maximin prepares to attack the ſenate and their emperors.

Whilſt in Rome and Africa revolutions ſucceeded each other with ſuch amazing rapidity, the mind of Maximin was agitated by the moſt furious paſſions. He is ſaid to have received the news of the rebellion of the Gordians, and of the decree of the ſenate againſt him, not with the temper of a man, but the rage of a wild beaſt; which, as it could not diſcharge itſelf on the diſtant ſenate, threatened the life of his ſon, of his friends, and of all who ventured to approach his perſon. The grateful intelligence of the death of the Gordians was quickly followed by the aſſurance that the ſenate, laying aſide all hopes of pardon or accommodation, had ſubſtituted in their room two emperors, with whoſe merit he could not be unacquainted. Revenge was the only conſolation left to Maximin, and revenge could only be obtained by arms. The ſtrength of the legions had been aſſembled by Alexander from

from all parts of the empire. Three ſucceſsful campaigns againſt the Germans and the Sarmatians, had raiſed their fame, confirmed their diſcipline, and even increaſed their numbers, by filling the ranks with the flower of the barbarian youth. The life of Maximin had been ſpent in war, and the candid ſeverity of hiſtory cannot refuſe him the valour of a ſoldier, or even the abilities of an experienced general[31]. It might naturally be expected, that a prince of ſuch a character, inſtead of ſuffering the rebellion to gain ſtability by delay, ſhould immediately have marched from the banks of the Danube to thoſe of the Tyber, and that his victorious army, inſtigated by contempt for the ſenate, and eager to gather the ſpoils of Italy, ſhould have burned with impatience to finiſh the eaſy and lucrative conqueſt. Yet as far as we can truſt to the obſcure chronology of that period[32], it appears that

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[31] In Herodian, l. vii. p. 249, and in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, we have three ſeveral orations of Maximin to his army, on the rebellion of Africa and Rome: M. de Tillemont has very juſtly obſerved, that they neither agree with each other, nor with truth. Hiſtoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 799.

[32] The careleſſneſs of the writers of that age leaves us in a ſingular perplexity. 1. We know that Maximus and Balbinus were killed during the Capitoline games. Herodian, l. viii. p. 285. The authority of Cenſorinus (de Die Natali, c. 18.) enables us to fix thoſe games with certainty to the year 238, but leaves us in ignorance of the month or day. 2. The election of Gordian by the ſenate, is fixed, with equal certainty, to the 27th of May; but we are at a loſs to diſcover, whether it was in the ſame or the preceding year. Tillemont and Muratori, who maintains the two oppoſite opinions, bring into the field a deſultory troop of authorities, conjectures, and probabilities. The one ſeems to draw out, the other to contract, the ſeries of events between thoſe periods, more than can be well reconciled to reaſon and hiſtory. Yet it is neceſſary to chooſe between them.

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the operations of ſome foreign war deferred the Italian expedition till the enſuing ſpring. From the prudent conduct of Maximin, we may learn that the ſavage features of his character have been exaggerated by the pencil of party, that his paſſions, however impetuous, ſubmitted to the force of reaſon, and that the barbarian poſſeſſed ſomething of the generous ſpirit of Sylla, who ſubdued the enemies of Rome, before he ſuffered himſelf to revenge his private injuries [33].

Marches into Italy. A. D. 238. February.

When the troops of Maximin, advancing in excellent order, arrived at the foot of the Julian Alps, they were terrified by the ſilence and deſolation that reigned on the frontiers of Italy. The villages and open towns had been abandoned on their approach by the inhabitants, the cattle was driven away, the proviſions removed, or deſtroyed, the bridges broke down, nor was any thing left which could afford either ſhelter or ſubſiſtence to an invader. Such had been the wiſe orders of the generals of the ſenate; whoſe deſign was to protract the war, to ruin the army of Maximin by the ſlow operation of famine, and to conſume his ſtrength in the ſieges of the principal cities of Italy, which they had plentifully ſtored with men and proviſions from the deſerted country. Aquileia received and withſtood the firſt ſhock of the invaſion. The ſtreams that iſſue from the head of the Hadriatic gulf, ſwelled

Siege of Aquileia.

[33] Velleius Paterculus, l. ii. c. 24. The preſident de Monteſquieu (in his dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates) expreſſes the ſentiments of the dictator, in a ſpirited and even a ſublime manner.

by

by the melting of the winter ſnows[34], oppoſed an unexpected obſtacle to the arms of Maximin. At length, on a ſingular bridge, conſtructed with art and difficulty of large hogſheads, he tranſported his army to the oppoſite bank, rooted up the beautiful vineyards in the neighbourhood of Aquileia, demoliſhed the ſuburbs, and employed the timber of the buildings in the engines and towers, with which on every ſide he attacked the city. The walls, fallen to decay during the ſecurity of a long peace, had been haſtily repaired on this ſudden emergency: but the firmeſt defence of Aquileia conſiſted in the conſtancy of the citizens; all ranks of whom, inſtead of being diſmayed, were animated by the extreme danger, and their knowledge of the tyrant's unrelenting temper. Their courage was ſupported and directed by Criſpinus and Menophilus, two of the twenty lieutenants of the ſenate, who with a ſmall body of regular troops had thrown themſelves into the beſieged place. The army of Maximin was repulſed on repeated attacks, his machines

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34 Muratori (Annali d'Italia, tom. ii. p. 294.) thinks the melting of the ſnows ſuits better with the months of June or July, than with that of February. The opinion of a man who paſſed his life between the Alps and the Appennines, is undoubtedly of great weight; yet I obſerve, 1. That the long winter, of which Muratori takes advantage, is to be found only in the Latin verſion, and not in the Greek text of Herodian. 2. That the viciſſitude of ſuns and rains, to which the ſoldiers of Maximin were expoſed (Herodian, l. viii. p. 277.) denotes the ſpring rather than the ſummer. We may obſerve likewiſe, that theſe ſeveral ſtreams, as they melted into one, compoſed the Timavus, ſo poetically (in every ſenſe of the word) deſcribed by Virgil. They are about twelve miles to the eaſt of Aquileia. See Cluver. Italia Antiqua, tom. i. p. 189, &c.

deſtroyed

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deſtroyed by ſhowers of artificial fire; and the generous enthuſiaſm of the Aquileians was exalted into a confidence of ſucceſs, by the opinion, that Belenus, their tutelar deity, combated in perſon in the defence of his diſtreſſed worſhippers [35].

Conduct of Maximus.

The emperor Maximus, who had advanced as far as Ravenna, to ſecure that important place, and to haſten the military preparations, beheld the event of the war in the more faithful mirror of reaſon and policy. He was too ſenſible, that a ſingle town could not reſiſt the perſevering efforts of a great army; and he dreaded, leſt the enemy, tired with the obſtinate reſiſtance of Aquileia, ſhould on a ſudden relinquiſh the fruitleſs ſiege, and march directly towards Rome. The fate of the empire and the cauſe of freedom muſt then be committed to the chance of a battle; and what arms could he oppoſe to the veteran legions of the Rhine and Danube? Some troops newly levied among the generous but enervated youth of Italy; and a body of German auxiliaries, on whoſe firmneſs, in the hour of trial, it was dangerous to depend. In the midſt of theſe juſt alarms, the ſtroke of domeſtic conſpiracy puniſhed the crimes of Maximin, and delivered Rome and the ſenate from the calamities that would ſurely have attended the victory of an enraged barbarian.

35 Herodian, l. viii. p. 272. The Celtic deity was ſuppoſed to be Apollo, and received under that name the thanks of the ſenate. A temple was likewiſe built to Venus the bald, in honour of the women of Aquileia, who had given up their hair to make ropes for the military engines.

The

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Murder of Maximin and his ſon. A.D. 238. April.

The people of Aquileia had ſcarcely experienced any of the common miſeries of a ſiege, their magazines were plentifully ſupplied, and ſeveral fountains within the walls aſſured them of an inexhauſtible reſource of freſh water. The ſoldiers of Maximin were, on the contrary, expoſed to the inclemency of the ſeaſon, the contagion of diſeaſe, and the horrors of famine. The open country was ruined, the rivers filled with the ſlain, and polluted with blood. A ſpirit of deſpair and diſaffection began to diffuſe itſelf among the troops; and as they were cut off from all intelligence, they eaſily believed that the whole empire had embraced the cauſe of the ſenate, and that they were left as devoted victims to periſh under the impregnable walls of Aquileia. The fierce temper of the tyrant was exaſperated by diſappointments, which he imputed to the cowardice of his army; and his wanton and ill-timed cruelty, inſtead of ſtriking terror, inſpired hatred, and a juſt deſire of revenge. A party of Prætorian guards, who trembled for their wives and children in the camp of Alba, near Rome, executed the ſentence of the ſenate. Maximin, abandoned by his guards, was ſlain in his tent, with his ſon (whom he had aſſociated to the honours of the purple), Anulinus the præfect, and the principal miniſters of his tyranny [36]. The ſight of their heads, borne on

[36] Herodian, l. viii. p. 279. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 146. The duration of Maximin's reign has not been defined with much accuracy, except by Eutropius, who allows him three years and a few days (l. ix.

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on the point of ſpears, convinced the citizens of Aquileia, that the ſiege was at an end; the gates of the city were thrown open, a liberal market was provided for the hungry troops of Maximin, and the whole army joined in ſolemn proteſtations of fidelity to the ſenate and the people of Rome, and to their lawful emperors Maximus and Balbinus. Such was the deſerved fate of a brutal ſavage, deſtitute, as he has generally been repreſented, of every ſentiment that diſtinguiſhes a civilized, or even a human being. The body was ſuited to the ſoul. The ſtature of Maximin exceeded the meaſure of eight feet, and circumſtances almoſt incredible are related of his matchleſs ſtrength and appetite [37]. Had he lived in a leſs enlightened age, tradition and poetry might well have deſcribed him as one of thoſe monſtrous giants, whoſe ſupernatural power was conſtantly exerted for the deſtruction of mankind.

His portrait.

Joy of the Roman world.

It is eaſier to conceive than to deſcribe the univerſal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant, the news of which is ſaid to have been carried in four days from Aquileia to Rome. The return of Maximus was a triumphal proceſ-

(lxix. 1.); we may depend on the integrity of the text, as the Latin original is checked by the Greek verſion of Pæanius.

37 Eight Roman feet and one third, which are equal to above eight Engliſh feet, as the two meaſures are to each other in the proportion of 967 to 1000. See Graves's diſcourſe on the Roman foot. We are told that Maximin could drink in a day an amphora (or about ſeven gallons of wine), and eat thirty or forty pounds of meat. He could move a loaded waggon, break a horſe's leg with his fiſt, crumble ſtones in his hand, and tear up ſmall trees by the roots. See his life in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

ſion,

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ſion, his colleague and young Gordian went out to meet him, and the three princes made their entry into the capital, attended by the ambaſſadors of almoſt all the cities of Italy, ſaluted with the ſplendid offerings of gratitude and ſuperſtition, and received with the unfeigned acclamations of the ſenate and people, who perſuaded themſelves that a golden age would ſucceed to an age of iron[38]. The conduct of the two emperors correſponded with theſe expectations. They adminiſtered juſtice in perſon; and the rigour of the one was tempered by the other's clemency. The oppreſſive taxes with which Maximin had loaded the rights of inheritance and ſucceſſion, were repealed, or at leaſt moderated. Diſcipline was revived, and with the advice of the ſenate many wiſe laws were enacted by their Imperial miniſters, who endeavoured to reſtore a civil conſtitution on the ruins of military tyranny. "What reward may we expect for delivering "Rome from a monſter?" was the queſtion aſked by Maximus, in a moment of freedom and confidence. Balbinus anſwered it without heſitation, "The love of the ſenate, of the people, "and of all mankind." "Alas!" replied his more penetrating colleague, "Alas! I dread the "hatred of the ſoldiers, and the fatal effects of "their reſentment[39]." His apprehenſions were but too well juſtified by the event.

[38] See the congratulatory letter of Claudius Julianus the conſul, to the two emperors, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

[39] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 171.

Whilſt

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Sedition at Rome.

Whilſt Maximus was preparing to defend Italy againſt the common foe, Balbinus, who remained at Rome, had been engaged in ſcenes of blood and inteſtine diſcord. Diſtruſt and jealouſy reigned in the ſenate; and even in the temples where they aſſembled, every ſenator carried either open or concealed arms. In the midſt of their deliberations, two veterans of the guards, actuated either by curioſity or a ſiniſter motive, audaciouſly thruſt themſelves into the houſe, and advanced by degrees beyond the altar of Victory. Gallicanus, a conſular, and Mæcenas, a Prætorian ſenator, viewed with indignation their inſolent intruſion: drawing their daggers, they laid the ſpies, for ſuch they deemed them, dead at the foot of the altar, and then advancing to the door of the ſenate, imprudently exhorted the multitude to maſſacre the Prætorians, as the ſecret adherents of the tyrant. Thoſe who eſcaped the firſt fury of the tumult took refuge in the camp, which they defended with ſuperior advantage againſt the reiterated attacks of the people, aſſiſted by the numerous bands of gladiators, the property of opulent nobles. The civil war laſted many days, with infinite loſs and confuſion on both ſides. When the pipes were broken that ſupplied the camp with water, the Prætorians were reduced to intolerable diſtreſs; but in their turn they made deſperate ſallies into the city, ſet fire to a great number of houſes, and filled the ſtreets with the blood of the inhabitants. The emperor Balbinus attempted, by ineffectual edicts and precarious truces, to reconcile

cile the factions at Rome. But their animoſity, CHAP. VII. though ſmothered for a while, burnt with redoubled violence. The ſoldiers, deteſting the ſenate and the people, deſpiſed the weakneſs of a prince, who wanted either the ſpirit or the power to command the obedience of his ſubjects [40].

Diſcontent of the Prætorian guards.

After the tyrant's death, his formidable army had acknowledged, from neceſſity rather than from choice, the authority of Maximus, who tranſported himſelf without delay to the camp before Aquileia. As ſoon as he had received their oath of fidelity, he addreſſed them in terms full of mildneſs and moderation; lamented, rather than arraigned, the wild diſorders of the times, and aſſured the ſoldiers, that of all their paſt conduct, the ſenate would remember only their generous deſertion of the tyrant, and their voluntary return to their duty. Maximus enforced his exhortations by a liberal donative, purified the camp by a ſolemn ſacrifice of expiation, and then diſmiſſed the legions to their ſeveral provinces, impreſſed, as he hoped, with a lively ſenſe of gratitude and obedience [41]. But nothing could reconcile the haughty ſpirit of the Prætorians. They attended the emperors on the memorable day of their public entry into Rome; but amidſt the general acclamations, the ſullen dejected countenance of the guards ſufficiently declared that they conſidered themſelves as the object, rather than the partners, of the triumph. When the whole body was united in their camp, thoſe who had ſerved under Maximin, and thoſe

[40] Herodian, l. viii. p. 258. [41] Herodian, l. viii. p. 213.

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who had remained at Rome, inſenſibly communicated to each other their complaints and apprehenſions. The emperors choſen by the army had periſhed with ignominy; thoſe elected by the ſenate were ſeated on the throne[42]. The long diſcord between the civil and military powers was decided by a war, in which the former had obtained a complete victory. The ſoldiers muſt now learn a new doctrine of ſubmiſſion to the ſenate; and whatever clemency was affected by that politic aſſembly, they dreaded a ſlow revenge, coloured by the name of diſcipline, and juſtified by fair pretences of the public good. But their fate was ſtill in their own hands; and if they had courage to deſpiſe the vain terrors of an impotent republic, it was eaſy to convince the world, that thoſe who were maſters of the arms, were maſters of the authority, of the ſtate.

Maſſacre of Maximus and Balbinus.

When the ſenate elected two princes, it is probable that, beſides the declared reaſon of providing for the various emergencies of peace and war, they were actuated by the ſecret deſire of weakening by diviſion the deſpotiſm of the ſupreme magiſtrate. Their policy was effectual, but it proved fatal both to their emperors and to themſelves. The jealouſy of power was ſoon exaſperated by the difference of character. Maximus deſpiſed Balbinus as a luxurious noble, and was in his turn diſdained by his colleague as an

[42] The obſervation had been made imprudently enough in the acclamations of the ſenate, and with regard to the ſoldiers it carried the appearance of a wanton inſult. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 170.

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obſcure ſoldier. Their ſilent diſcord was underſtood rather than ſeen [43]; but the mutual conſciouſneſs prevented them from uniting in any vigorous meaſures of defence againſt their common enemies of the Prætorian camp. The whole city was employed in the Capitoline games, and the emperors were left almoſt alone in the palace. On a ſudden they were alarmed by the approach of a troop of deſperate aſſaſſins. Ignorant of each other's ſituation or deſigns, for they already occupied very diſtant apartments, afraid to give or to receive aſſiſtance, they waſted the important moments in idle debates and fruitleſs recriminations. The arrival of the guards put an end to the vain ſtrife. They ſeized on theſe emperors of the ſenate, for ſuch they called them with malicious contempt, ſtripped them of their garments, and dragged them in inſolent triumph through the ſtreets of Rome, with a deſign of inflicting a ſlow and cruel death on theſe unfortunate princes. The fear of a reſcue from the faithful Germans of the Imperial guards, ſhortened their tortures; and their bodies, mangled with a thouſand wounds, were left expoſed to the inſults or to the pity of the populace [44].

A. D. 238. July 15.

43 Diſcordiæ tacitæ, et quæ intelligerentur potius quam viderentur. *Hiſt. Auguſt.* p. 170. This well-choſen expreſſion is probably ſtolen from ſome better writer.

44 Herodian, l. viii. p. 287, 288.

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The third Gordian remains ſole emperor.

In the ſpace of a few months, ſix princes had been cut off by the ſword. Gordian, who had already received the title of Cæſar, was the only perſon that occurred to the ſoldiers as proper to fill the vacant throne [45]. They carried him to the camp, and unanimouſly ſaluted him Auguſtus and Emperor. His name was dear to the ſenate and people; his tender age promiſed a long impunity of military licence; and the ſubmiſſion of Rome and the provinces to the choice of the Prætorian guards, ſaved the republic, at the expence indeed of its freedom and dignity, from the horrors of a new civil war in the heart of the capital [46].

Innocence and virtues of Gordian.

As the third Gordian was only nineteen years of age at the time of his death, the hiſtory of his life, were it known to us with greater accuracy than it really is, would contain little more than the account of his education, and the conduct of the miniſters, who by turns abuſed or guided the ſimplicity of his unexperienced youth. Immediately after his acceſſion, he fell into the hands of

45 Quia non alius erat in præſenti, is the expreſſion of the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

46 Quintus Curtius (l. x. c. 9.) pays an elegant compliment to the emperor of the day, for having, by his happy acceſſion, extinguiſhed ſo many firebrands, ſheathed ſo many ſwords, and put an end to the evils of a divided government. After weighing with attention every word of the paſſage, I am of opinion, that it ſuits better with the elevation of Gordian, than with any other period of the Roman Hiſtory. In that caſe, it may ſerve to decide the age of Quintus Curtius. Thoſe who place him under the firſt Cæſars, argue from the purity of his ſtyle, but are embarraſſed by the ſilence of Quintilian, in his accurate liſt of Roman hiſtorians.

his mother's eunuchs, that pernicious vermin of the Eaſt, who, ſince the days of Elagabalus, had infeſted the Roman palace. By the artful conſpiracy of theſe wretches, an impenetrable veil was drawn between an innocent prince and his oppreſſed ſubjects, the virtuous diſpoſition of Gordian was deceived, and the honours of the empire ſold without his knowledge, though in a very public manner, to the moſt worthleſs of mankind. We are ignorant by what fortunate accident the emperor eſcaped from this ignominious ſlavery, and devolved his confidence on a miniſter, whoſe wiſe counſels had no object except the glory of his ſovereign, and the happineſs of the people. It ſhould ſeem that love and learning introduced Miſitheus to the favour of Gordian. The young prince married the daughter of his maſter of rhetoric, and promoted his father-in-law to the firſt offices of the empire. Two admirable letters that paſſed between them are ſtill extant. The miniſter, with the conſcious dignity of virtue, congratulates Gordian that he is delivered from the tyranny of the eunuchs [47], and ſtill more that he is ſenſible of his deliverance. The emperor acknowledges, with an amiable confuſion, the errors of his paſt conduct; and laments, with ſingular propriety, the misfortune of a monarch, from whom a venal tribe of

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A. D. 240. Adminiſtration of Miſitheus.

47 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 161. From ſome hints in the two letters, I ſhould expect that the eunuchs were not expelled the palace, without ſome degree of gentle violence, and that young Gordian rather approved of, than conſented to, their diſgrace.

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courtiers perpetually labour to conceal the truth [48].

The Perſian war. A. D. 242.

The life of Miſitheus had been ſpent in the profeſſion of letters, not of arms; yet ſuch was the verſatile genius of that great man, that, when he was appointed Prætorian præfect, he diſcharged the military duties of his place with vigour and ability. The Perſians had invaded Meſopotamia, and threatened Antioch. By the perſuaſion of his father-in-law, the young emperor quitted the luxury of Rome, opened, for the laſt time recorded in hiſtory, the temple of Janus, and marched in perſon into the Eaſt. On his approach with a great army, the Perſians withdrew their garriſons from the cities which they had already taken, and retired from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Gordian enjoyed the pleaſure of announcing to the ſenate the firſt ſucceſs of his arms, which he aſcribed with a becoming modeſty and gratitude to the wiſdom of his father and præfect. During the whole expedition, Miſitheus watched over the ſafety and diſcipline of the army; whilſt he prevented their dangerous murmurs by maintaining a regular plenty in the camp, and by eſtabliſhing ample magazines of vinegar, bacon, ſtraw, barley, and wheat, in all the cities of the frontier [49]. But the proſperity

[48] Duxit uxorem filiam Miſithei, quem cauſâ eloquentiæ dignum parentela ſuâ putavit; et præfectum ſtatim fecit; poſt quod, non puerile jam et contemptibile videbatur imperium.

[49] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 162. Aurelius Victor. Porphyrius in Vit. Plotin. ap. Fabricium Biblioth. Græc. l. iv. c. 36. The philoſopher Plotinus accompanied the army, prompted by the love of knowledge, and by the hope of penetrating as far as India.

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of Gordian expired with Miſitheus, who died of a flux, not without very ſtrong ſuſpicions of poiſon. Philip, his ſucceſſor in the præfecture, was an Arab by birth, and conſequently, in the earlier part of his life, a robber by profeſſion. His riſe from ſo obſcure a ſtation to the firſt dignities of the empire, ſeems to prove that he was a bold and able leader. But his boldneſs prompted him to aſpire to the throne, and his abilities were employed to ſupplant, not to ſerve, his indulgent maſter. The minds of the ſoldiers were irritated by an artificial ſcarcity, created by his contrivance in the camp; and the diſtreſs of the army was attributed to the youth and incapacity of the prince. It is not in our power to trace the ſucceſſive ſteps of the ſecret conſpiracy and open ſedition, which were at length fatal to Gordian. A ſepulchral monument was erected to his memory on the ſpot [50] where he was killed, near the conflux of the Euphrates with the little river Aboras [51]. The fortunate Philip, raiſed to the empire by the votes of the ſoldiers, found a ready obedience from the ſenate and the provinces [52].

A. D. 243. Arts of Philip.

Murder of Gordian. A. D. 244. March.

We cannot forbear tranſcribing the ingenious, though ſomewhat fanciful deſcription, which a

Form of a military republic.

50 About twenty miles from the little town of Circeſium, on the frontier of the two empires.

51 The inſcription (which contained a very ſingular pun) was eraſed by the order of Licinius, who claimed ſome degree of relationſhip to Philip (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 165.); but the *tumulus* or mound of earth which formed the ſepulchre, ſtill ſubſiſted in the time of Julian. See Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 5.

52 Aurelius Victor. Eutrop. ix. 2. Oroſius, vii. 20. Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 5. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 19. Philip, who was a native of Boſtra, was about forty years of age.

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celebrated writer of our own times has traced of the military government of the Roman empire. "What in that age was called the Roman empire, was only an irregular republic, not unlike "the Ariſtocracy [53] of Algiers [54], where the militia, poſſeſſed of the ſovereignty, creates and "depoſes a magiſtrate, who is ſtyled a Dey. "Perhaps, indeed, it may be laid down as a "general rule, that a military government is, in "ſome reſpects, more republican than monarchical. Nor can it be ſaid that the ſoldiers "only partook of the government by their diſobedience and rebellions. The ſpeeches made "to them by the emperors, were they not at "length of the ſame nature as thoſe formerly "pronounced to the people by the conſuls and "the tribunes? And although the armies had "no regular place or forms of aſſembly; though "their debates were ſhort, their action ſudden, "and their reſolves ſeldom the reſult of cool reflection, did they not diſpoſe, with abſolute "ſway, of the public fortune? What was the "emperor, except the miniſter of a violent government, elected for the private benefit of the "ſoldiers?

"When the army had elected Philip, who was "Prætorian præfect to the third Gordian, the

53 Can the epithet of *Ariſtocracy* be applied, with any propriety, to the government of Algiers? Every military government floats between the extremes of abſolute monarchy and wild democracy.

54 The military republic of the Mamalukes in Egypt, would have afforded M. de Monteſquieu (ſee Conſiderations ſur la Grandeur et la Decadence des Romains, c. 16.) a juſter and more noble parallel.

"latter

"latter demanded, that he might remain ſole "emperor; he was unable to obtain it. He re- "queſted, that the power might be equally di- "vided between them; the army would not liſten "to his ſpeech. He conſented to be degraded "to the rank of Cæſar; the favour was refuſed "him. He deſired, at leaſt, he might be ap- "pointed Prætorian præfect; his prayer was re- "jected. Finally, he pleaded for his life. The "army, in theſe ſeveral judgments, exerciſed the "ſupreme magiſtracy." According to the hiſtorian, whoſe doubtful narrative the preſident De Monteſquieu has adopted, Philip, who, during the whole tranſaction, had preſerved a ſullen ſilence, was inclined to ſpare the innocent life of his benefactor; till, recollecting that his innocence might excite a dangerous compaſſion in the Roman world, he commanded, without regard to his ſuppliant cries, that he ſhould be ſeized, ſtript, and led away to inſtant death. After a moment's pauſe, the inhuman ſentence was executed [55].

Reign of Philip.

On his return from the Eaſt to Rome, Philip, deſirous of obliterating the memory of his crimes, and of captivating the affections of the people,

55 The Auguſtan Hiſtory (p. 163, 164.) cannot, in this inſtance, be reconciled with itſelf or with probability. How could Philip condemn his predeceſſor, and yet conſecrate his memory? How could he order his public execution, and yet, in his letters to the ſenate, exculpate himſelf from the guilt of his death? Philip, though an ambitious uſurper, was by no means a mad tyrant. Some chronological difficulties have likewiſe been diſcovered by the nice eyes of Tillemont and Muratori, in this ſuppoſed aſſociation of Philip to the empire.

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ſolemnized the ſecular games with infinite pomp and magnificence. Since their inſtitution or revival by Auguſtus [56], they had been celebrated by Claudius, by Domitian, and by Severus, and were now renewed the fifth time, on the accompliſhment of the full period of a thouſand years from the foundation of Rome. Every circumſtance of the ſecular games was ſkilfully adapted to inſpire the ſuperſtitious mind with deep and ſolemn reverence. The long interval between them [57] exceeded the term of human life; and as none of the ſpectators had already ſeen them, none could flatter themſelves with the expectation of beholding them a ſecond time. The myſtic ſacrifices were performed, during three nights, on the banks of the Tyber; and the Campus Martius reſounded with muſic and dances, and was illuminated with innumerable lamps and torches. Slaves and ſtrangers were excluded from any participation in theſe national ceremonies. A chorus of twenty-ſeven youths, and as many virgins, of noble families, and whoſe parents were both alive, implored the propitious gods in favour of the preſent, and for the hope

Secular games. A. D. 248. April 21.

[56] The account of the laſt ſuppoſed celebration, though in an enlightened period of hiſtory, was ſo very doubtful and obſcure, that the alternative ſeems not doubtful. When the popiſh jubilees, the copy of the ſecular games, were invented by Boniface VIII. the crafty pope pretended that he only revived an ancient inſtitution. See M. le Chais Lettres ſur les Jubilès.

[57] Either of a hundred, or a hundred and ten years. Varro and Livy adopted the former opinion, but the infallible authority of the Sibyl conſecrated the latter (Cenſorinus de Die Natal. c. 17.). The emperors Claudius and Philip, however, did not treat the oracle with implicit reſpect.

of

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of the riſing generation; requeſting, in religious hymns, that, according to the faith of their ancient oracles, they would ſtill maintain the virtue, the felicity, and the empire of the Roman people[58]. The magnificence of Philip's ſhows and entertainments dazzled the eyes of the multitude. The devout were employed in the rites of ſuperſtition, whilſt the reflecting few revolved in their anxious minds the paſt hiſtory and the future fate of the empire.

Decline of the Roman empire.

Since Romulus, with a ſmall band of ſhepherds and outlaws, fortified himſelf on the hills near the Tyber, ten centuries had already elapſed[59]. During the four firſt ages, the Romans, in the laborious ſchool of poverty, had acquired the virtues of war and government: By the vigorous exertion of thoſe virtues, and by the aſſiſtance of fortune, they had obtained, in the courſe of the three ſucceeding centuries, an abſolute empire over many countries of Europe, Aſia, and Africa. The laſt three hundred years had been conſumed in apparent proſperity and internal decline. The nation of ſoldiers, magiſtrates, and legiſlators, who compoſed the thirty-five tribes of the Roman people, was diſſolved into the common maſs of mankind, and confounded with the millions of ſervile provincials, who had received the name,

[58] The idea of the ſecular games is beſt underſtood from the poem of Horace, and the deſcription of Zoſimus, l. ii. p. 167, &c.

[59] The received calculation of Varro aſſigns to the foundation of Rome, an æra that correſponds with the 754th year before Chriſt. But ſo little is the chronology of Rome to be depended on, in the more early ages, that Sir Iſaac Newton has brought the ſame event as low as the year 627.

without

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without adopting the ſpirit of Romans. A mercenary army, levied among the ſubjects and barbarians of the frontier, was the only order of men who preſerved and abuſed their independence. By their tumultuary election, a Syrian, a Goth, or an Arab, was exalted to the throne of Rome, and inveſted with deſpotic power over the conqueſts and over the country of the Scipios.

The limits of the Roman empire ſtill extended from the Weſtern Ocean to the Tigris, and from Mount Atlas to the Rhine and the Danube. To the undiſcerning eye of the vulgar, Philip appeared a monarch no leſs powerful than Hadrian or Auguſtus had formerly been. The form was ſtill the ſame, but the animating health and vigour were fled. The induſtry of the people was diſcouraged and exhauſted by a long ſeries of oppreſſion. The diſcipline of the legions, which alone, after the extinction of every other virtue, had propped the greatneſs of the ſtate, was corrupted by the ambition, or relaxed by the weakneſs, of the emperors. The ſtrength of the frontiers, which had always conſiſted in arms rather than in fortifications, was inſenſibly undermined; and the faireſt provinces were left expoſed to the rapaciouſneſs or ambition of the barbarians, who ſoon diſcovered the decline of the Roman empire.

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Of the State of Perſia after the Reſtoration of the Monarchy by Artaxerxes.

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The barbarians of the East and of the North.

WHENEVER Tacitus indulges himſelf in thoſe beautiful epiſodes, in which he relates ſome domeſtic tranſaction of the Germans or of the Parthians, his principal object is to relieve the attention of the reader from a uniform ſcene of vice and miſery. From the reign of Auguſtus to the time of Alexander Severus, the enemies of Rome were in her boſom; the tyrants, and the ſoldiers; and her proſperity had a very diſtant and feeble intereſt in the revolutions that might happen beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates. But when the military order had levelled, in wild anarchy, the power of the prince, the laws of the ſenate, and even the diſcipline of the camp, the barbarians of the north and of the eaſt, who had long hovered on the frontier, boldly attacked the provinces of a declining monarchy. Their vexatious inroads were changed into formidable irruptions, and, after a long viciſſitude of mutual calamities, many tribes of the victorious invaders eſtabliſhed themſelves in the provinces of the Roman empire. To obtain a clearer knowledge of theſe great events, we ſhall endeavour to form a previous idea of the character, forces, and deſigns of thoſe nations who avenged the cauſe of Hannibal and Mithridates.

In

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Revolutions of Asia.

In the more early ages of the world, whilſt the foreſt that covered Europe afforded a retreat to a few wandering ſavages, the inhabitants of Aſia were already collected into populous cities, and reduced under extenſive empires, the ſeat of the arts, of luxury, and of deſpotiſm. The Aſſyrians reigned over the eaſt [1], till the ſceptre of Ninus and Semiramis dropt from the hands of their enervated ſucceſſors. The Medes and the Babylonians divided their power, and were themſelves ſwallowed up in the monarchy of the Perſians, whoſe arms could not be confined within the narrow limits of Aſia. Followed, as it is ſaid, by two millions of *men*, Xerxes, the deſcendant of Cyrus, invaded Greece. Thirty thouſand *ſoldiers*, under the command of Alexander, the ſon of Philip, who was intruſted by the Greeks with their glory and revenge, were ſufficient to ſubdue Perſia. The princes of the houſe of Seleucus uſurped and loſt the Macedonian command over the Eaſt. About the ſame time, that, by an ignominious treaty, they reſigned to the Romans the country on this ſide Mount Taurus, they were driven by the Parthians, an obſcure horde of Scythian origin, from all the provinces of Upper Aſia. The formidable power of the Par-

[1] An ancient chronologiſt quoted by Velleius Paterculus (l. i. c. 6.) obſerves, that the Aſſyrians, the Medes, the Perſians, and the Macedonians, reigned over Aſia one thouſand nine hundred and ninety-five years, from the acceſſion of Ninus to the defeat of Antiochus by the Romans. As the latter of theſe great events happened 289 years before Chriſt, the former may be placed 2184 years before the ſame æra. The Aſtronomical Obſervations, found at Babylon by Alexander, went fifty years higher.

thians,

thians, which ſpread from India to the frontiers of Syria, was in its turn ſubverted by Ardſhir, or Artaxerxes; the founder of a new dynaſty, which, under the name of Saſſanides, governed Perſia till the invaſion of the Arabs. This great revolution, whoſe fatal influence was ſoon experienced by the Romans, happened in the fourth year of Alexander Severus, two hundred and twenty-ſix years after the Chriſtian æra [2].

The Perſian monarchy reſtored by Artaxerxes.

Artaxerxes had ſerved with great reputation in the armies of Artaban, the laſt king of the Parthians, and it appears that he was driven into exile and rebellion by royal ingratitude, the cuſtomary reward for ſuperiour merit. His birth was obſcure, and the obſcurity equally gave room to the aſperſions of his enemies, and the flattery of his adherents. If we credit the ſcandal of the former, Artaxerxes ſprang from the illegitimate commerce of a tanner's wife with a common ſoldier [3]. The latter repreſent him, as deſcended from a branch of the ancient kings of Perſia, though time and misfortune had gradually reduced his anceſtors to the humble ſtation of pri-

[2] In the five hundred and thirty-eighth year of the æra of Seleucus. See Agathias, l. ii. p. 63. This great event (ſuch is the careleſſneſs of the Orientals) is placed by Eutychius, as high as the tenth year of Commodus; and by Moſes of Chorene, as low as the reign of Philip. Ammianus Marcellinus has ſo ſervilely copied (xxiii. 6.) his ancient materials, which are indeed very good, that he deſcribes the family of the Arſacides as ſtill ſeated on the Perſian throne in the middle of the fourth century.

[3] The tanner's name was Babec; the ſoldier's, Saſſan: from the former Artaxerxes obtained the ſurname of Babegan; from the latter, all his deſcendants have been ſtyled *Saſſanides*.

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vate citizens [4]. As the lineal heir of the monarchy, he aſſerted his right to the throne, and challenged the noble taſk of delivering the Perſians from the oppreſſion under which they groaned above five centuries ſince the death of Darius. The Parthians were defeated in three great battles. In the laſt of theſe their king Artaban was ſlain, and the ſpirit of the nation was for ever broken [5]. The authority of Artaxerxes was ſolemnly acknowledged in a great aſſembly held at Balch in Khoraſan. Two younger branches of the royal houſe of Arſaces were confounded among the proſtrate ſatraps. A third, more mindful of ancient grandeur than of preſent neceſſity, attempted to retire, with a numerous train of vaſſals, towards their kinſman the king of Armenia; but this little army of deſerters was intercepted, and cut off, by the vigilance of the conqueror [6], who boldly aſſumed the double diadem, and the title of King of Kings, which had been enjoyed by his predeceſſor. But theſe pompous titles, inſtead of gratifying the vanity of the Perſian, ſerved only to admoniſh him of his duty, and to inflame in his ſoul the ambition of reſtoring, in their full ſplendour, the religion and empire of Cyrus.

Reformation of the Magian religion.

I. During the long ſervitude of Perſia under the Macedonian and the Parthian yoke, the nations of Europe and Aſia had mutually adopted

4 D'Herbelot. Bibliotheque Orientale. *Ardſhir.*

5 Dion Caſſius, l. lxxx. Herodian, l. vi. p. 207. Abulpharagius Dynaſt. p. 80.

6 See Moſes Chorenenſis, l. ii. c. 65—71.

and

and corrupted each other's ſuperſtitions. The Arſacides, indeed, practiſed the worſhip of the Magi; but they diſgraced and polluted it with a various mixture of foreign idolatry. The memory of Zoroaſter, the ancient prophet and philoſopher of the Perſians [7], was ſtill revered in the Eaſt; but the obſolete and myſterious language in which the Zendaveſta was compoſed [8], opened a field of diſpute to ſeventy ſects, who variouſly explained the fundamental doctrines of their religion, and were all indifferently derided by a crowd of infidels, who rejected the divine miſſion and miracles of the prophet. To ſuppreſs the idolaters, reunite the ſchiſmatics, and confute the unbelievers, by the infallible deciſion of a general council, the pious Artaxerxes ſummoned the Magi from all parts of his dominions. Theſe prieſts, who had ſo long ſighed in contempt and obſcurity, obeyed the welcome ſummons; and on the appointed day appeared, to the number of about eighty thouſand. But as the debates of

7 Hyde and Prideaux, working up the Perſian legends and their own conjectures into a very agreeable ſtory, repreſent Zoroaſter as a contemporary of Darius Hyſtaſpes. But it is ſufficient to obſerve, that the Greek writers, who lived almoſt in the age of Darius, agree in placing the æra of Zoroaſter many hundred, or even thouſand, years before their own time. The judicious criticiſm of Mr. Moyle perceived, and maintained againſt his uncle Dr. Prideaux, the antiquity of the Perſian prophet. See his work, vol. ii.

8 That ancient idiom was called the *Zend*. The language of the commentary, the Pehlvi, though much more modern, has ceaſed many ages ago to be a living tongue. This fact alone (if it is allowed as authentic) ſufficiently warrants the antiquity of thoſe writings, which M. d'Anquetil has brought into Europe, and tranſlated into French.

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ſo tumultuous an aſſembly could not have been directed by the authority of reaſon, or influenced by the art of policy, the Perſian ſynod was reduced, by ſucceſſive operations, to forty thouſand, to four thouſand, to four hundred, to forty, and at laſt to ſeven Magi, the moſt reſpected for their learning and piety. One of theſe, Erdaviraph, a young but holy prelate, received from the hands of his brethren three cups of ſoporiferous wine. He drank them off, and inſtantly fell into a long and profound ſleep. As ſoon as he waked, he related to the king and to the believing multitude, his journey to Heaven, and his intimate conferences with the Deity. Every doubt was ſilenced by this ſupernatural evidence; and the articles of the faith of Zoroaſter were fixed with equal authority and preciſion [9]. A ſhort delineation of that celebrated ſyſtem will be found uſeful, not only to diſplay the character of the Perſian nation, but to illuſtrate many of their moſt important tranſactions, both in peace and war, with the Roman empire [10].

Perſian theology; two principles.

The great and fundamental article of the ſyſtem, was the celebrated doctrine of the two principles; a bold and injudicious attempt of Eaſtern philoſophy to reconcile the exiſtence of moral

9 Hyde de Religione veterum Perſ. c. 21.

10 I have principally drawn this account from the Zendaveſta of M. d'Anquetil, and the Sadder, ſubjoined to Dr. Hyde's treatiſe. It muſt, however, be confeſſed, that the ſtudied obſcurity of a prophet, the figurative ſtyle of the Eaſt, and the deceitful medium of a French or Latin verſion, may have betrayed us into error and herefy, in this abridgment of Perſian theology.

and

and physical evil, with the attributes of a beneficent Creator and Governor of the world. The first and original Being, in whom, or by whom, the universe exists, is denominated in the writings of Zoroaster, *Time without bounds*; but it must be confessed, that this infinite substance seems rather a metaphysical abstraction of the mind, than a real object endowed with self-consciousness, or possessed of moral perfections. From either the blind, or the intelligent operation of this infinite Time, which bears but too near an affinity with the chaos of the Greeks, the two secondary but active principles of the universe, were from all eternity produced, Ormusd and Ahriman, each of them possessed of the powers of creation, but each disposed, by his invariable nature, to exercise them with different designs. The principle of good is eternally absorbed in light; the principle of evil eternally buried in darkness. The wise benevolence of Ormusd formed man capable of virtue, and abundantly provided his fair habitation with the materials of happiness. By his vigilant providence, the motion of the planets, the order of the seasons, and the temperate mixture of the elements, are preserved. But the malice of Ahriman has long since pierced *Ormusd's egg*; or, in other words, has violated the harmony of his works. Since that fatal irruption, the most minute articles of good and evil are intimately intermingled and agitated together; the rankest poisons spring up amidst the most salutary plants; deluges, earthquakes, and

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conflagrations, atteſt the conflict of Nature, and the little world of man is perpetually ſhaken by vice and misfortune. While the reſt of human kind are led away captives in the chains of their infernal enemy, the faithful Perſian alone reſerves his religious adoration for his friend and protector Ormuſd, and fights under his banner of light, in the full confidence that he ſhall, in the laſt day, ſhare the glory of his triumph. At that deciſive period, the enlightened wiſdom of goodneſs will render the power of Ormuſd ſuperior to the furious malice of his rival. Ahriman and his followers, diſarmed and ſubdued, will ſink into their native darkneſs; and virtue will maintain the eternal peace and harmony of the univerſe [11].

Religious worſhip.

The theology of Zoroaſter was darkly comprehended by foreigners, and even by the far greater number of his diſciples; but the moſt careleſs obſervers were ſtruck with the philoſophic ſimplicity of the Perſian worſhip. "That people," ſays Herodotus [12], "rejects the uſe of temples, "of altars, and of ſtatues, and ſmiles at the folly "of thoſe nations, who imagine that the gods "are ſprung from, or bear any affinity with, the "human nature. The tops of the higheſt moun-

[11] The modern Perſees (and in ſome degree the Sadder) exalt Ormuſd into the firſt and omnipotent cauſe, while they degrade Ahriman into an inferior but rebellious ſpirit. Their deſire of pleaſing the Mahometans may have contributed to refine their theological ſyſtem.

[12] Herodotus, l. i. c. 131. But Dr. Prideaux thinks, with reaſon, that the uſe of temples was afterwards permitted in the Magian religion.

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" tains are the places chosen for sacrifices. Hymns " and prayers are the principal worship; the " Supreme God who fills the wide circle of Hea- " ven, is the object to whom they are addressed." Yet, at the same time, in the true spirit of a polytheist, he accuses them of adoring Earth, Water, Fire, the Winds, and the Sun and Moon. But the Persians of every age have denied the charge, and explained the equivocal conduct, which might appear to give a colour to it. The elements, and more particularly Fire, Light, and the Sun, whom they called Mithra, were the objects of their religious reverence, because they considered them as the purest symbols, the noblest productions, and the most powerful agents of the Divine Power and Nature [13].

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Every mode of religion, to make a deep and lasting impression on the human mind, must exercise our obedience, by enjoining practices of devotion, for which we can assign no reason; and must acquire our esteem, by inculcating moral duties analogous to the dictates of our own hearts. The religion of Zoroaster was abundantly provided with the former, and possessed a sufficient portion of the latter. At the age of puberty, the faithful Persian was invested with a mysterious girdle, the badge of the divine protection; and from that moment, all the actions of his life, even the most indifferent, or the most necessary,

Ceremonies and moral precepts.

[13] Hyde de Relig. Pers. c. 8. Notwithstanding all their distinctions and protestations, which seem sincere enough, their tyrants, the Mahometans, have constantly stigmatised them as idolatrous worshippers of the Fire.

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were ſanctified by their peculiar prayers, ejaculations, or genuflexions; the omiſſion of which, under any circumſtances, was a grievous ſin, not inferiour in guilt to the violation of the moral duties. The moral duties, however, of juſtice, mercy, liberality, &c. were in their turn required of the diſciple of Zoroaſter, who wiſhed to eſcape the perſecution of Ahriman, and to live with Ormuſd in a bliſsful eternity, where the degree of felicity will be exactly proportioned to the degree of virtue and piety [14].

Encouragement of agriculture.

But there are ſome remarkable inſtances, in which Zoroaſter lays aſide the prophet, aſſumes the legiſlator, and diſcovers a liberal concern for private and public happineſs, ſeldom to be found among the groveling or viſionary ſchemes of ſuperſtition. Faſting and celibacy, the common means of purchaſing the divine favour, he condemns with abhorrence, as a criminal rejection of the beſt gifts of Providence. The ſaint, in the Magian religion, is obliged to beget children, to plant uſeful trees, to deſtroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands of Perſia, and to work out his ſalvation by purſuing all the labours of agriculture. We may quote from the Zendaveſta a wiſe and benevolent maxim, which compenſates for many an abſurdity. "He who ſows the ground with

[14] See the Sadder, the ſmalleſt part of which conſiſts of moral precepts. The ceremonies enjoined are infinite and trifling. Fifteen genuflexions, prayers, &c. were required whenever the devout Perſian cut his nails, or made water; or as often as he put on the ſacred girdle. Sadder, Art. 14. 50. 60.

"care

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" care and diligence, acquires a greater ſtock " of religious merit, than he could gain by the " repetition of ten thouſand prayers[15]." In the ſpring of every year a feſtival was celebrated, deſtined to repreſent the primitive equality, and the preſent connexion, of mankind. The ſtately kings of Perſia, exchanging their vain pomp for more genuine greatneſs, freely mingled with the humbleſt but moſt uſeful of their ſubjects. On that day the huſbandmen were admitted, without diſtinction, to the table of the king and his ſatraps. The monarch accepted their petitions, inquired into their grievances, and converſed with them on the moſt equal terms. " From " your labours, was he accuſtomed to ſay (and " to ſay with truth, if not with ſincerity), from " your labours, we receive our ſubſiſtence; you " derive your tranquillity from our vigilance; " ſince, therefore, we are mutually neceſſary to " each other, let us live together like brothers " in concord and love[16]." Such a feſtival muſt indeed have degenerated, in a wealthy and deſpotic empire, into a theatrical repreſentation; but it was at leaſt a comedy well worthy of a royal audience, and which might ſometimes imprint a ſalutary leſſon on the mind of a young prince.

Had Zoroaſter, in all his inſtitutions, invariably ſupported this exalted character, his name would deſerve a place with thoſe of Numa and

Power of the Magi.

[15] Zendaveſta, tom. i. p. 224. and Precis du Syſteme de Zoroaſtre, tom. iii.

[16] Hyde de Religione Perſarum, c. 19.

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Confucius, and his ſyſtem would be juſtly entitled to all the applauſe, which it has pleaſed ſome of our Divines, and even ſome of our philoſophers, to beſtow on it. But in that motley compoſition, dictated by reaſon and paſſion, by enthuſiaſm and by ſelfiſh motives, ſome uſeful and ſublime truths were diſgraced by a mixture of the moſt abject and dangerous ſuperſtition. The Magi, or ſacerdotal order, were extremely numerous, ſince, as we have already ſeen, fourſcore thouſand of them were convened in a general council. Their forces were multiplied by diſcipline. A regular hierarchy was diffuſed through all the provinces of Perſia; and the Archimagus, who reſided at Balch, was reſpected as the viſible head of the church, and the lawful ſucceſſor of Zoroaſter [17]. The property of the Magi was very conſiderable. Beſides the leſs invidious poſſeſſion of a large tract of the moſt fertile lands of Media [18], they levied a general tax on the fortunes and the induſtry of the Perſians [19]. "Though your good works," ſays the intereſted prophet, "exceed in number the leaves of the

[17] Hyde de Religione Perſarum, c. 28. Both Hyde and Prideaux affect to apply to the Magian, the terms conſecrated to the Chriſtian hierarchy.

[18] Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. He informs us (as far as we may credit him) of two curious particulars; 1. that the Magi derived ſome of their moſt ſecret doctrines from the Indian Brachmans; and, 2. that they were a tribe or family, as well as order.

[19] The divine inſtitution of tythes exhibits a ſingular inſtance of conformity between the law of Zoroaſter and that of Moſes. Thoſe who cannot otherwiſe account for it, may ſuppoſe, if they pleaſe, that the Magi of the latter times inſerted ſo uſeful an interpolation into the writings of their prophet.

"trees,

" trees, the drops of rain, the ſtars in the hea- CHAP. VIII.
" ven, or the ſands on the ſea-ſhore, they will
" all be unprofitable to you, unleſs they are
" accepted by the *deſtour*, or prieſt. To obtain
" the acceptation of this guide to ſalvation, you
" muſt faithfully pay him *tythes* of all you poſ-
" ſeſs, of your goods, of your lands, and of your
" money. If the deſtour be ſatisfied, your ſoul
" will eſcape hell tortures; you will ſecure praiſe
" in this world, and happineſs in the next. For
" the deſtours are the teachers of religion; they
" know all things, and they deliver all men [20]."

Theſe convenient maxims of reverence and implicit faith were doubtleſs imprinted with care on the tender minds of youth; ſince the Magi were the maſters of education in Perſia, and to their hands the children even of the royal family were intruſted [21]. The Perſian prieſts, who were of a ſpeculative genius, preſerved and inveſtigated the ſecrets of Oriental philoſophy; and acquired, either by ſuperiour knowledge or ſuperiour art, the reputation of being well verſed in ſome occult ſciences, which have derived their appellation from the Magi [22]. Thoſe of more active diſpoſitions mixed with the world in courts and cities; and it is obſerved, that the adminiſtration of Artaxerxes was in a great meaſure directed by the counſels of the ſacerdotal order, whoſe dignity, either from policy or devotion, that prince reſtored to its ancient ſplendour [23].

[20] Sadder, Art. 8. [21] Plato in Alcibiad.

[22] Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. l. xxx. c. 1.) obſerves, that magic held mankind by the triple chain of religion, of phyſic, and of aſtronomy.

[23] Agathias, l. iv. p. 134.

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Spirit of perſecution.

The firſt counſel of the Magi was agreeable to the unſociable genius of their faith [24], to the practice of ancient kings [25], and even to the example of their legiſlator, who had fallen a victim to a religious war, excited by his own intolerant zeal [26]. By an edict of Artaxerxes, the exerciſe of every worſhip, except that of Zoroaſter, was ſeverely prohibited. The temples of the Parthians, and the ſtatues of their deified monarchs, were thrown down with ignominy [27]. The ſword of Ariſtotle (ſuch was the name given by the Orientals to the polytheiſm and philoſophy of the Greeks) was eaſily broken [28]; the flames of perſecution ſoon reached the more ſtubborn Jews and Chriſtians [29]; nor did they ſpare the heretics of their own nation and religion. The majeſty of Ormuſd, who was jealous of a rival, was ſeconded by the deſpotiſm of Artaxerxes, who could not ſuffer a rebel; and the ſchiſmatics within his vaſt empire were ſoon reduced to the inconſiderable number of eighty thouſand [30]. This ſpirit

[24] Mr. Hume, in the Natural Hiſtory of Religion, ſagaciouſly remarks, that the moſt refined and philoſophic ſects are conſtantly the moſt intolerant.

[25] Cicero de Legibus, ii. 10. Xerxes, by the advice of the Magi, deſtroyed the temples of Greece.

[26] Hyde de Relig. Perſar. c. 23, 24. D'Herbelot Bibliothéque. Orientale *Zerduſht*. Life of Zoroaſter in tom. ii. of the Zendaveſta.

[27] Compare Moſes of Chorene, l. ii. c. 74. with Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii. 6. Hereafter I ſhall make uſe of theſe paſſages.

[28] Rabbi Abraham in the Tarikh Schickard, p. 108, 109.

[29] Baſnage Hiſtoire des Juifs, l. viii. c. 3. Sozomen, l. ii. c. 1. Manes, who ſuffered an ignominious death, may be deemed a Magian as well as a Chriſtian heretic.

[30] Hyde de Religione Perſar. c. 21.

of

of perſecution reflects diſhonour on the religion of Zoroaſter; but as it was not productive of any civil commotion, it ſerved to ſtrengthen the new monarchy, by uniting all the various inhabitants of Perſia in the bands of religious zeal. CHAP. VIII.

Eſtabliſhment of the royal authority in the provinces.

II. Artaxerxes, by his valour and conduct, had wreſted the ſceptre of the Eaſt from the ancient royal family of Parthia. There ſtill remained the more difficult taſk of eſtabliſhing, throughout the vaſt extent of Perſia, a uniform and vigorous adminiſtration. The weak indulgence of the Arſacides had reſigned to their ſons and brothers the principal provinces, and the greateſt offices of the kingdom, in the nature of hereditary poſſeſſions. The *vitaxæ*, or eighteen moſt powerful ſatraps, were permitted to aſſume the regal title; and the vain pride of the monarch was delighted with a nominal dominion over ſo many vaſſal kings. Even tribes of barbarians in their mountains, and the Greek cities of Upper Aſia[31], within their walls, ſcarcely acknowledged, or ſeldom obeyed, any ſuperiour; and the Parthian empire exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal ſyſtem[32] which has ſince prevailed in Europe. But the active vic-

[31] Theſe colonies were extremely numerous. Seleucus Nicator founded thirty-nine cities, all named from himſelf, or ſome of his relations (ſee Appian in Syriac. p. 124.). The æra of Seleucus (ſtill in uſe among the Eaſtern Chriſtians) appears as late as the year 508, of Chriſt 196, on the medals of the Greek cities within the Parthian empire. See Moyle's works, vol. i. p. 273, &c. and M. Freret, Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xix.

[32] The modern Perſians diſtinguiſh that period as the dynaſty of the kings of the nations. See Plin. Hiſt. Nat. vi. 25.

tor,

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tor, at the head of a numerous and disciplined army, visited in person every province of Persia. The defeat of the boldest rebels, and the reduction of the strongest fortifications[33], diffused the terror of his arms, and prepared the way for the peaceful reception of his authority. An obstinate resistance was fatal to the chiefs; but their followers were treated with lenity[34]. A cheerful submission was rewarded with honours and riches; but the prudent Artaxerxes, suffering no person except himself to assume the title of king, abolished every intermediate power between the throne and the people. His kingdom, nearly equal in extent to modern Persia, was, on every side, bounded by the sea, or by great rivers; by the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Araxes, the Oxus, and the Indus, by the Caspian Sea, and the Gulph of Persia[35]. That country was computed to

Extent and population of Persia.

33 Eutychius (tom. i. p. 367. 371. 375.) relates the siege of the island of Mesene in the Tigris, with some circumstances not unlike the story of Nisus and Scylla.

34 Agathias, ii. 164. The princes of Segestan defended their independence during many years. As romances generally transport to an ancient period the events of their own time, it is not impossible that the fabulous exploits of Rustan prince of Segestan may have been grafted on this real history.

35 We can scarcely attribute to the Persian monarchy the sea-coast of Gedrosia or Macran, which extends along the Indian Ocean from Cape Jask (the promontory Capella) to Cape Goadel. In the time of Alexander, and probably many ages afterwards, it was thinly inhabited by a savage people of Ichthyophagi, or Fishermen, who knew no arts, who acknowledged no master, and who were divided by inhospitable deserts from the rest of the world. (See Arrian de Reb. Indicis.) In the twelfth century, the little town of Taiz (supposed by M. d'Anville to be the Tesa of Ptolemy) was peopled and enriched

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to contain, in the laſt century, five hundred and fifty-four cities, ſixty thouſand villages, and about forty millions of ſouls[36]. If we compare the adminiſtration of the houſe of Saſſan with that of the houſe of Sefi, the political influence of the Magian with that of the Mahometan religion, we ſhall probably infer, that the kingdom of Artaxerxes contained at leaſt as great a number of cities, villages, and inhabitants. But it muſt likewiſe be confeſſed, that in every age the want of harbours on the ſea-coaſt, and the ſcarcity of freſh water in the inland provinces, have been very unfavourable to the commerce and agriculture of the Perſians; who, in the calculation of their numbers, ſeem to have indulged one of the meaneſt, though moſt common, articles of national vanity.

Recapitulation of the war between the Parthian and Roman empire.

As ſoon as the ambitious mind of Artaxerxes had triumphed over the reſiſtance of his vaſſals, he began to threaten the neighbouring ſtates, who, during the long ſlumber of his predeceſſors, had inſulted Perſia with impunity. He obtained ſome eaſy victories over the wild Scythians and the effeminate Indians; but the Romans were an enemy, who, by their paſt injuries and preſent power, deſerved the utmoſt efforts of his arms. A forty years tranquillity, the fruit of valour and

enriched by the reſort of the Arabian merchants. (See Geographie Nubiens, p. 58, and d'Anville Geographie Ancienne, tom. ii. p. 283.) In the laſt age the whole country was divided between three princes, one Mahometan and two Idolaters, who maintained their independence againſt the ſucceſſors of Shaw Abbas. (Voyages de Tavernier, part i. l. v. p. 635.)

[36] Chardin, tom. iii. c. 1, 2, 3.

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moderation, had ſucceeded the victories of Trajan. During the period that elapſed from the acceſſion of Marcus to the reign of Alexander, the Roman and the Parthian empires were twice engaged in war; and although the whole ſtrength of the Arſacides contended with a part only of the forces of Rome, the event was moſt commonly in favour of the latter. Macrinus, indeed, prompted by his precarious ſituation, and puſillanimous temper, purchaſed a peace at the expence of near two millions of our money[37]; but the generals of Marcus, the emperor Severus, and his ſon, erected many tropies in Armenia, Meſopotamia, and Aſſyria. Among their exploits, the imperfect relation of which would have unſeaſonably interrupted the more important ſeries of domeſtic revolutions, we ſhall only mention the repeated calamities of the two great cities of Seleucia and Cteſiphon.

Cities of Seleucia and Cteſiphon.

Seleucia, on the weſtern bank of the Tigris, about forty-five miles to the north of ancient Babylon, was the capital of the Macedonian conqueſts in Upper Aſia[38]. Many ages after the fall of their empire, Seleucia retained the genuine characters of a Grecian colony, arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a ſenate of three hundred nobles; the people conſiſted of

37 Dion, l. xxviii. p. 1335.

38 For the preciſe ſituation of Babylon, Seleucia, Cteſiphon, Modain, and Bagdad, cities often confounded with each other; ſee an excellent Geographical Tract of M. d'Anville, in Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xxx.

six hundred thousand citizens; the walls were strong, and as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, they viewed with contempt the power of the Parthian; but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony [39]. The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors; and the Imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia [40]. The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly swelled into a great city [41]. Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as Ctesiphon and Seleucia. They were received as friends by the Greek colony; they attacked as enemies the seat of the Parthian kings; yet both cities experienced the same treatment. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of three hundred thousand of the inhabitants, tar- CHAP. VIII. A.D. 165.

39 Tacit. Annal. xi. 42. Plin. Hist. Nat. vi. 26.

40 This may be inferred from Strabo, l. xvi. p. 743.

41 That most curious traveller Bernier, who followed the camp of Aurengzebe from Dehli to Cashmir, describes with great accuracy the immense moving city. The guard of cavalry consisted of 35,000 men, that of infantry of 10,000. It was computed that the camp contained 150,000 horses, mules, and elephants; 50,000 camels, 50,000 oxen, and between 300,000 and 400,000 persons. Almost all Dehli followed the court, whose magnificence supported its industry.

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niſhed the glory of the Roman triumph[42]. Seleucia, already exhauſted by the neighbourhood of a too powerful rival, ſunk under the fatal blow; but Cteſiphon, in about thirty-three years, had ſufficiently recovered its ſtrength to maintain an obſtinate ſiege againſt the emperor Severus. The city was, however, taken by aſſault; the king, who defended it in perſon, eſcaped with precipitation; an hundred thouſand captives, and a rich booty, rewarded the fatigues of the Roman ſoldiers[43]. Notwithſtanding theſe misfortunes, Cteſiphon ſucceeded to Babylon and to Seleucia, as one of the great capitals of the Eaſt. In ſummer, the monarch of Perſia enjoyed at Ecbatana the cool breezes of the mountains of Media; but the mildneſs of the climate engaged him to prefer Cteſiphon for his winter reſidence.

A.D. 198.

Conqueſt of Oſrhoene by the Romans.

From theſe ſucceſsful inroads the Romans derived no real or laſting benefit; nor did they attempt to preſerve ſuch diſtant conqueſts, ſeparated from the provinces of the empire by a large tract of intermediate deſert. The reduction of the kingdom of Oſrhoene was an acquiſition of leſs ſplendour indeed, but of a far more ſolid advantage. That little ſtate occupied the northern and moſt fertile part of Meſopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Edeſſa,

[42] Dion, l. lxxi. p. 1178. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 38. Eutrop. viii. 10. Euſeb. in Chronic. Quadratus (quoted in the Auguſtan Hiſtory) attempted to vindicate the Romans, by alleging, that the citizens of Seleucia had firſt violated their faith.

[43] Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1263. Herodian, l. iii. p. 120. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 70.

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its capital, was ſituated about twenty miles beyond the former of thoſe rivers; and the inhabitants, ſince the time of Alexander, were a mixed race of Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and Armenians[44]. The feeble ſovereigns of Oſrhoene, placed on the dangerous verge of two contending empires, were attached from inclination to the Parthian cauſe; but the ſuperiour power of Rome exacted from them a reluctant homage, which is ſtill atteſted by their medals. After the concluſion of the Parthian war under Marcus, it was judged prudent to ſecure ſome ſubſtantial pledges of their doubtful fidelity. Forts were conſtructed in ſeveral parts of the country, and a Roman garriſon was fixed in the ſtrong town of Niſibis. During the troubles that followed the death of Commodus, the princes of Oſrhoene attempted to ſhake off the yoke; but the ſtern policy of Severus confirmed their dependence[45], and the perfidy of Caracalla completed the eaſy conqueſt. Abgarus, the laſt king of Edeſſa, was ſent in chains to Rome, his dominions reduced into a province, and his capital dignified with the rank of colony; and thus the Romans, about ten years before the fall of the Parthian monarchy, ob-

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A.D. 216.

44 The poliſhed citizens of Antioch called thoſe of Edeſſa mixed barbarians. It was, however, ſome praiſe, that of the three dialects of the Syriac, the pureſt and moſt elegant (the Aramæan) was ſpoke at Edeſſa. This remark M. Bayer (Hiſt. Edeſſ. p. 5.) has borrowed from George of Malatia, a Syrian writer.

45 Dion, l. lxxv. p. 1248, 1249, 1250. M. Bayer has neglected to uſe this moſt important paſſage.

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tained a firm and permanent eſtabliſhment beyond the Euphrates[46].

Artaxerxes claims the provinces of Aſia, and declares war againſt the Romans. A.D. 230.

Prudence as well as glory might have juſtified a war on the ſide of Artaxerxes, had his views been confined to the defence or the acquiſition of a uſeful frontier. But the ambitious Perſian openly avowed a far more extenſive deſign of conqueſt; and he thought himſelf able to ſupport his lofty pretenſions by the arms of reaſon as well as by thoſe of power. Cyrus, he alleged, had firſt ſubdued, and his ſucceſſors had for a long time poſſeſſed, the whole extent of Aſia, as far as the Propontis and the Ægean ſea; the provinces of Caria and Ionia, under their empire, had been governed by Perſian ſatraps, and all Egypt, to the confines of Æthiopia, had acknowledged their ſovereignty[47]. Their rights had been ſuſpended, though not deſtroyed, by a long uſurpation; and as ſoon as he received the Perſian diadem, which birth and ſucceſsful valour had placed upon his head, the firſt great duty of his ſtation called upon him to reſtore the ancient limits and ſplendour of the monarchy. The Great King, therefore (ſuch was the haughty ſtyle of his embaſſies to the emperor Alexander), commanded the Romans inſtantly to depart from

46 This kingdom, from Oſrhoes, who gave a new name to the country, to the laſt Abgarus, had laſted 353 years. See the learned work of M. Bayer, Hiſtoria Oſrhoena et Edeſſena.

47 Xenophon, in the preface to the Cyropædia, gives a clear and magnificent idea of the extent of the empire of Cyrus. Herodotus (l. iii. c. 79, &c.) enters into a curious and particular deſcription of the twenty great *Satrapies* into which the Perſian empire was divided by Darius Hyſtaſpes.

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all the provinces of his anceſtors, and yielding to the Perſians the empire of Aſia, to content themſelves with the undiſturbed poſſeſſion of Europe. This haughty mandate was delivered by four hundred of the talleſt and moſt beautiful of the Perſians; who, by their fine horſes, ſplendid arms, and rich apparel, diſplayed the pride and greatneſs of their maſter[48]. Such an embaſſy was much leſs an offer of negociation than a declaration of war. Both Alexander Severus and Artaxerxes, collecting the military force of the Roman and Perſian monarchies, reſolved in this important conteſt to lead their armies in perſon.

Pretended victory of Alexander Severus. A.D. 233.

If we credit what ſhould ſeem the moſt authentic of all records, an oration, ſtill extant, and delivered by the emperor himſelf to the ſenate, we muſt allow that the victory of Alexander Severus was not inferior to any of thoſe formerly obtained over the Perſians by the ſon of Philip. The army of the Great King conſiſted of one hundred and twenty thouſand horſe, clothed in complete armour of ſteel; of ſeven hundred elephants, with towers filled with archers on their backs, and of eighteen hundred chariots, armed with ſcythes. This formidable hoſt, the like of which is not to be found in eaſtern hiſtory, and has ſcarcely been imagined in eaſtern romance[49], was

[48] Herodian, vi. 209. 212.

[49] There were two hundred ſcythed chariots at the battle of Arbela, in the hoſt of Darius. In the vaſt army of Tigranes, which was vanquiſhed by Lucullus, ſeventeen thouſand horſe only were com-

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was diſcomfited in a great battle, in which the Roman Alexander approved himſelf an intrepid ſoldier and a ſkilful general. The Great King fled before his valour; an immenſe booty, and the conqueſt of Meſopotamia, were the immediate fruits of this ſignal victory. Such are the circumſtances of this oſtentatious and improbable relation, dictated, as it too plainly appears, by the vanity of the monarch, adorned by the unbluſhing ſervility of his flatterers, and received without contradiction by a diſtant and obſequious ſenate[50]. Far from being inclined to believe that the arms of Alexander obtained any memorable advantage over the Perſians, we are induced to ſuſpect, that all this blaze of imaginary glory was deſigned to conceal ſome real diſgrace.

completely armed. Antiochus brought fifty-four elephants into the field againſt the Romans: by his frequent wars and negociations with the princes of India, he had once collected an hundred and fifty of thoſe great animals; but it may be queſtioned, whether the moſt powerful monarch of Hindoſtan ever formed a line of battle of ſeven hundred elephants. Inſtead of three or four thouſand elephants, which the Great Mogul was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs, Tavernier (Voyages, part ii. l. i. p. 198.) diſcovered, by a more accurate inquiry, that he had only five hundred for his baggage, and eighty or ninety for the ſervice of war. The Greeks have varied with regard to the number which Porus brought into the field; but Quintus Curtius (viii. 13.), in this inſtance judicious and moderate, is contented with eighty-five elephants, diſtinguiſhed by their ſize and ſtrength. In Siam, where theſe animals are the moſt numerous and the moſt eſteemed, eighteen elephants are allowed as a ſufficient proportion for each of the nine brigades into which a juſt army is divided. The whole number, of one hundred and ſixty-two elephants of war, may ſometimes be doubled. Hiſt. des Voyages, tom. ix. p. 260.

[50] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 133.

Our

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More probable account of the war.

Our ſuſpicions are confirmed by the authority of a contemporary hiſtorian, who mentions the virtues of Alexander with reſpect, and his faults with candour. He deſcribes the judicious plan which had been formed for the conduct of the war. Three Roman armies were deſtined to invade Perſia at the ſame time, and by different roads. But the operations of the campaign, though wiſely concerted, were not executed either with ability or ſucceſs. The firſt of theſe armies, as ſoon as it had entered the marſhy plains of Babylon, towards the artificial conflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris [51], was encompaſſed by the ſuperior numbers, and deſtroyed by the arrows, of the enemy. The alliance of Choſroes king of Armenia [52], and the long tract of mountainous country, in which the Perſian cavalry was of little ſervice, opened a ſecure entrance into the heart of Media, to the ſecond of the Roman armies. Theſe brave troops laid waſte the adjacent provinces, and by ſeveral ſucceſsful actions againſt Artaxerxes, gave a faint colour to the emperor's vanity. But the retreat of this victorious army was imprudent, or at leaſt unfortunate. In repaſſing the mountains, great numbers of ſoldiers periſhed by the badneſs of the roads, and

51 M. de Tillemont has already obſerved, that Herodian's geography is ſomewhat confuſed.

52 Moſes of Chorene (Hiſt. Armen. l. ii. c. 71.) illuſtrates this invaſion of Media, by aſſerting that Choſroes, king of Armenia, defeated Artaxerxes, and purſued him to the confines of India. The exploits of Choſroes have been magnified; and he acted as a dependent ally to the Romans.

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the ſeverity of the winter ſeaſon. It had been reſolved, that whilſt theſe two great detachments penetrated into the oppoſite extremes of the Perſian dominions, the main body, under the command of Alexander himſelf, ſhould ſupport their attack, by invading the centre of the kingdom. But the unexperienced youth, influenced by his mother's counſels, and perhaps by his own fears, deſerted the braveſt troops, and the faireſt proſpect of victory; and after conſuming in Meſopotamia an inactive and inglorious ſummer, he led back to Antioch an army diminiſhed by ſickneſs, and provoked by diſappointment. The behaviour of Artaxerxes had been very different. Flying with rapidity from the hills of Media to the marſhes of the Euphrates, he had every where oppoſed the invaders in perſon; and in either fortune, had united with the ableſt conduct the moſt undaunted reſolution. But in ſeveral obſtinate engagements againſt the veteran legions of Rome, the Perſian monarch had loſt the flower of his troops. Even his victories had weakened his power. The favourable opportunities of the abſence of Alexander, and of the confuſion that followed that emperor's death, preſented themſelves in vain to his ambition. Inſtead of expelling the Romans, as he pretended, from the continent of Aſia, he found himſelf unable to wreſt from their hands the little province of Meſopotamia [53].

[53] For the account of this war, ſee Herodian, l. vi. p. 209. 212. The old abbreviators and modern compilers have blindly followed the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

The

CHAP. VIII.

Character and maxims of Artaxerxes. A. D. 240.

The reign of Artaxerxes, which from the laſt defeat of the Parthians laſted only fourteen years, forms a memorable æra in the hiſtory of the Eaſt, and even in that of Rome. His character ſeems to have been marked by thoſe bold and commanding features, that generally diſtinguiſh the princes who conquer, from thoſe who inherit, an empire. Till the laſt period of the Perſian monarchy, his code of laws was reſpected as the ground-work of their civil and religious policy [54]. Several of his ſayings are preſerved. One of them in particular diſcovers a deep inſight into the conſtitution of government. "The authority of the prince," ſaid Artaxerxes, "muſt "be defended by a military force; that force "can only be maintained by taxes; all taxes "muſt, at laſt, fall upon agriculture; and agri-"culture can never flouriſh except under the "protection of juſtice and moderation [55]." Artaxerxes bequeathed his new empire, and his ambitious deſigns againſt the Romans, to Sapor, a ſon not unworthy of his great father; but thoſe deſigns were too extenſive for the power of Perſia, and ſerved only to involve both nations in a long ſeries of deſtructive wars and reciprocal calamities.

54 Eutychius, tom. ii. p. 180. verſ. Pocock. The great Choſroes Nouſhirwan ſent the Code of Artaxerxes to all his ſatraps, as the invariable rule of their conduct.

55 D'Herbelot Bibliotheque Orientale, au mot *Ardſhir*. We may obſerve, that after an ancient period of fables, and a long interval of darkneſs, the modern hiſtories of Perſia begin to aſſume an air of truth with the dynaſty of the Saſſanides.

CHAP. VIII.

Military power of the Perſians.

The Perſians, long ſince civilized and corrupted, were very far from poſſeſſing the martial independence, and the intrepid hardineſs, both of mind and body, which have rendered the northern barbarians maſters of the world. The ſcience of war, that conſtituted the more rational force of Greece and Rome, as it now does of Europe, never made any conſiderable progreſs in the Eaſt. Thoſe diſciplined evolutions which harmonize and animate a confuſed multitude, were unknown to the Perſians. They were equally unſkilled in the arts of conſtructing, beſieging, or defending regular fortifications. They truſted more to their numbers than to their courage; more to their courage than to their diſcipline. The infantry was a half-armed ſpiritleſs crowd of peaſants, levied in haſte by the allurements of plunder, and as eaſily diſperſed by a victory as by a defeat. The monarch and his nobles tranſported into the camp the pride and luxury of the ſeraglio. Their military operations were impeded by a uſeleſs train of women, eunuchs, horſes, and camels; and in the midſt of a ſucceſsful campaign, the Perſian hoſt was often ſeparated or deſtroyed by an unexpected famine [56].

Their infantry contemptible.

Their cavalry excellent.

But the nobles of Perſia, in the boſom of luxury and deſpotiſm, preſerved a ſtrong ſenſe of perſonal gallantry and national honour. From

[56] Herodian, l. vi. p. 214. Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xxiii. c. 6. Some differences may be obſerved between the two hiſtorians, the natural effects of the changes produced by a century and a half.

the

the age of ſeven years they were taught to ſpeak truth, to ſhoot with the bow, and to ride; and it was univerſally confeſſed, that in the two laſt of theſe arts, they had made a more than common proficiency [57]. The moſt diſtinguiſhed youth were educated under the monarch's eye, practiſed their exerciſes in the gate of his palace, and were ſeverely trained up to the habits of temperance and obedience, in their long and laborious parties of hunting. In every province, the ſatrap maintained a like ſchool of military virtue. The Perſian nobles (ſo natural is the idea of feudal tenures) received from the king's bounty lands and houſes, on the condition of their ſervice in war. They were ready on the firſt ſummons to mount on horſeback, with a martial and ſplendid train of followers, and to join the numerous bodies of guards, who were carefully ſelected from amongſt the moſt robuſt ſlaves, and the braveſt adventurers of Aſia. Theſe armies, both of light and of heavy cavalry, equally formidable by the impetuoſity of their charge, and the rapidity of their motions, threatened, as an impending cloud, the eaſtern provinces of the declining empire of Rome [58].

57 The Perſians are ſtill the moſt ſkilful horſemen, and their horſes the fineſt in the Eaſt.

58 From Herodotus, Xenophon, Herodian, Ammianus, Chardin, &c. I have extracted ſuch *probable* accounts of the Perſian nobility, as ſeem either common to every age, or particular to that of the Saſſanides.

CHAP. IX.

The State of Germany till the Invaſion of the Barbarians, in the Time of the Emperor Decius.

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THE government and religion of Perſia have deſerved ſome notice, from their connexion with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. We ſhall occaſionally mention the Scythian, or Sarmatian tribes, which, with their arms and horſes, their flocks and herds, their wives and families, wandered over the immenſe plains which ſpread themſelves from the Caſpian Sea to the Viſtula, from the confines of Perſia to thoſe of Germany. But the warlike Germans, who firſt reſiſted, then invaded, and at length overturned, the weſtern monarchy of Rome, will occupy a much more important place in this hiſtory, and poſſeſs a ſtronger, and, if we may uſe the expreſſion, a more domeſtic, claim to our attention and regard. The moſt civilized nations of modern Europe iſſued from the woods of Germany; and in the rude inſtitutions of thoſe barbarians we may ſtill diſtinguiſh the original principles of our preſent laws and manners. In their primitive ſtate of ſimplicity and independence, the Germans were ſurveyed by the diſcerning eye, and delineated by the maſterly pencil, of Tacitus, the firſt of hiſtorians who applied the ſcience of philoſophy to the ſtudy of facts. The expreſſive conciſeneſs of his deſcriptions has deſerved to exerciſe

ercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times. The subject, however various and important, has already been so frequently, so ably, and so successfully discussed, that it is now grown familiar to the reader, and difficult to the writer. We shall therefore content ourselves with observing, and indeed with repeating, some of the most important circumstances of climate, of manners, and of institutions, which rendered the wild barbarians of Germany such formidable enemies to the Roman power. CHAP. IX.

Extent of Germany.

Ancient Germany, excluding from its independent limits the province westward of the Rhine, which had submitted to the Roman yoke, extended itself over a third part of Europe. Almost the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various tribes of one great nation, whose complexion, manners, and language denoted a common origin, and preserved a striking resemblance. On the west, ancient Germany was divided by the Rhine from the Gallic, and on the south, by the Danube, from the Illyrian provinces of the empire. A ridge of hills, rising from the Danube, and called the Carpathian mountains, covered Germany on the side of Dacia or Hungary. The eastern frontier was faintly marked by the mutual fears of the Germans and the Sarmatians, and was often confounded by the mixture of warring and confederating tribes of the two nations.

In

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In the remote darkneſs of the north, the ancients imperfectly deſcried a frozen ocean that lay beyond the Baltic ſea, and beyond the Peninſula, or iſlands[1] of Scandinavia.

Climate.

Some ingenious writers[2] have ſuſpected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at preſent; and the moſt ancient deſcriptions of the climate of Germany tend exceedingly to confirm their theory. The general complaints of intenſe froſt, and eternal winter, are perhaps little to be regarded, ſince we have no method of reducing to the accurate ſtandard of the thermometer, the feelings, or the expreſſions of an orator, born in the happier regions of Greece or Aſia. But I ſhall ſelect two remarkable circumſtances of a leſs equivocal nature. 1. The great rivers which covered the Roman provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, and capable of ſupporting the moſt enormous weights. The barbarians, who often choſe that ſevere ſeaſon for their inroads, tranſported, without apprehenſion or danger, their numerous armies, their

[1] The modern philoſophers of Sweden ſeem agreed that the waters of the Baltic gradually ſink in a regular proportion, which they have ventured to eſtimate at half an inch every year. Twenty centuries ago, the flat country of Scandinavia muſt have been covered by the ſea; while the high lands roſe above the waters, as ſo many iſlands of various forms and dimenſions. Such indeed is the notion given us by Mela, Pliny, and Tacitus, of the vaſt countries round the Baltic. See in the Bibliotheque Raiſonnée, tom. xl. and xlv. a large abſtract of Dalin's Hiſtory of Sweden, compoſed in the Swediſh language.

[2] In particular, Mr. Hume, the Abbé du Bos, and M. Pelloutier, Hiſt. des Celtes, tom. i.

cavalry,

cavalry, and their heavy waggons, over a vaſt and ſolid bridge of ice[3]. Modern ages have not preſented an inſtance of a like phænomenon. CHAP. IX.

2. The rein-deer, that uſeful animal, from whom the ſavage of the North derives the beſt comforts of his dreary life, is of a conſtitution that ſupports, and even requires, the moſt intenſe cold. He is found on the rock of Spitzberg, within ten degrees of the Pole; he ſeems to delight in the ſnows of Lapland and Siberia; but at preſent he cannot ſubſiſt, much leſs multiply, in any country to the ſouth of the Baltic[4]. In the time of Cæſar, the rein-deer, as well as the elk, and the wild bull, was a native of the Hercynian foreſt, which then overſhadowed a great part of Germany and Poland[5]. The modern improvements ſufficiently explain the cauſes of the diminution of the cold. Theſe immenſe woods have been gradually cleared, which intercepted from the earth the rays of the ſun[6]. The moraſſes have been drained, and, in proportion as the ſoil has been cultivated, the air has become more temperate. Canada, at this

3 Diodorus Siculus, l. v. p. 340. Edit. Weſſel. Herodian, l. viii. p. 221. Jornandes, c. 55. On the banks of the Danube, the wine, when brought to table, was frequently frozen into great lumps, *fruſta vini*. Ovid. Epiſt. ex Ponto, l. iv. 7. 9, 10. Virgil. Georgic. l. iii. 355. The fact is confirmed by a ſoldier and a philoſopher, who had experienced the intenſe cold of Thrace. See Xenophon, Anabaſis, l. vii. p. 560. Edit. Hutchinſon.

4 Buffon Hiſtoire Naturelle, tom. xii. p. 79. 116.

5 Cæſar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 23, &c. The moſt inquiſitive of the Germans were ignorant of its utmoſt limits, although ſome of them had travelled in it more than ſixty days journey.

6 Cluverius (Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 47.) inveſtigates the ſmall and ſcattered remains of the Hercynian wood.

day,

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day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany. Although situated in the same parallel with the finest provinces of France and England, that country experiences the most rigorous cold. The rein-deer are very numerous, the ground is covered with deep and lasting snow, and the great river of St. Lawrence is regularly frozen, in a season when the waters of the Seine and the Thames are usually free from ice [7].

Its effects on the natives.

It is difficult to ascertain, and easy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have supposed, and most have allowed, though, as it should seem, without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the North was favourable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and the human species more prolific, than in warmer or more temperate climes [8]. We may assert, with greater confidence, that the keen air of Germany formed the large and masculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty stature than the people of the South [9], gave them a kind of strength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inspired them with constitutional bravery, which is the result of nerves and spirits. The severity of a winter cam-

7 Charlevoix Histoire du Canada.

8 Olaus Rudbeck asserts that the Swedish women often bear ten or twelve children, and not uncommonly twenty or thirty; but the authority of Rudbeck is much to be suspected.

9 In hos artus, in hæc corpora, quæ miramur, excrescunt. Tacit. Germania, 3. 20. Cluver. l. i. c. 14.

paign,

paign, that chilled the courage of the Roman troops, was ſcarcely felt by theſe hardy children of the North [10], who in their turn were unable to reſiſt the ſummer heats, and diſſolved away in languor and ſickneſs under the beams of an Italian ſun [11].

Origin of the Germans.

There is not any where upon the globe, a large tract of country, which we have diſcovered deſtitute of inhabitants, or whoſe firſt population can be fixed with any degree of hiſtorical certainty. And yet, as the moſt philoſophic minds can ſeldom refrain from inveſtigating the infancy of great nations, our curioſity conſumes itſelf in toilſome and diſappointed efforts. When Tacitus conſidered the purity of the German blood, and the forbidding aſpect of the country, he was diſpoſed to pronounce thoſe barbarians *Indigenæ*, or natives of the ſoil. We may allow with ſafety, and perhaps with truth, that ancient Germany was not originally peopled by any foreign colonies already formed into a political ſociety [12]; but that the name and nation received their exiſtence from the gradual union of ſome wandering

[10] Plutarch. in Mario. The Cimbri, by way of amuſement, often ſlid down mountains of ſnow on their broad ſhields.

[11] The Romans made war in all climates, and by their excellent diſcipline were in a great meaſure preſerved in health and vigour. It may be remarked, that man is the only animal which can live and multiply in every country from the equator to the poles. The hog ſeems to approach the neareſt to our ſpecies in that privilege.

[12] Tacit German. c. 3. The emigration of the Gauls followed the courſe of the Danube, and diſcharged itſelf on Greece and Aſia. Tacitus could diſcover only one inconſiderable tribe that retained any traces of a Gallic origin.

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ſavages of the Hercynian woods. To aſſert thoſe ſavages to have been the ſpontaneous production of the earth which they inhabited, would be a raſh inference, condemned by religion, and unwarranted by reaſon.

Fables and conjectures.

Such rational doubt is but ill-ſuited with the genius of popular vanity. Among the nations who have adopted the Moſaic hiſtory of the world, the ark of Noah has been of the ſame uſe, as was formerly to the Greeks and Romans the ſiege of Troy. On a narrow baſis of acknowledged truth, an immenſe but rude ſuperſtructure of fable has been erected; and the wild Iriſhman [13], as well as the wild Tartar [14], could point out the individual ſon of Japhet, from whoſe loins his anceſtors were lineally deſcended. The laſt century abounded with antiquarians of profound learning and eaſy faith, who, by the dim light of legends and traditions, of conjectures and etymologies, conducted the great grandchildren of Noah from the Tower of Babel to the extremities of the globe. Of theſe judicious critics, one of the moſt enter-

[13] According to Dr. Keating (Hiſtory of Ireland, p. 13, 14.), the giant Partholanus, who was the ſon of Seara, the ſon of Eſra, the ſon of Sru, the ſon of Framant, the ſon of Fathaclan, the ſon of Magog, the ſon of Japhet, the ſon of Noah, landed on the coaſt of Munſter, the 14th day of May, in the year of the world one thouſand nine hundred and ſeventy-eight. Though he ſucceeded in his great enterpriſe, the looſe behaviour of his wife rendered his domeſtic life very unhappy, and provoked him to ſuch a degree, that he killed—her favourite greyhound. This, as the learned hiſtorian very properly obſerves, was the *firſt* inſtance of female falſehood and infidelity ever known in Ireland.

[14] Genealogical Hiſtory of the Tartars by Abulghazi Bahadur Khan.

taining

taining was Olaus Rudbeck, profeſſor in the univerſity of Upſal [15]. Whatever is celebrated either in hiſtory or fable, this zealous patriot aſcribes to his country. From Sweden (which formed ſo conſiderable a part of ancient Germany) the Greeks themſelves derived their alphabetical characters, their aſtronomy, and their religion. Of that delightful region (for ſuch it appeared to the eyes of a native) the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyperboreans, the gardens of the Heſperides, the Fortunate Iſlands, and even the Elyſian Fields, were all but faint and imperfect tranſcripts. A clime ſo profuſely favoured by Nature, could not long remain deſert after the flood. The learned Rudbeck allows the family of Noah a few years to multiply from eight to about twenty thouſand perſons. He then diſperſes them into ſmall colonies to repleniſh the earth, and to propagate the human ſpecies. The German or Swediſh detachment (which marched, if I am not miſtaken, under the command of Aſkenaz the ſon of Gomer, the ſon of Japhet) diſtinguiſhed itſelf by a more than common diligence in the proſecution of this great work. The northern hive caſt its ſwarms over the greateſt part of Europe, Africa, and Aſia; and (to uſe the author's metaphor) the blood circulated from the extremities to the heart.

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But all this well-laboured ſyſtem of German antiquities is annihilated by a ſingle fact, too well

The Germans ignorant of letters;

[15] His work, entitled Atlantica, is uncommonly ſcarce. Bayle has given two moſt curious extracts from it. Republique des Lettres Janvier et Fevrier, 1685.

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atteſted to admit of any doubt, and of too deciſive a nature to leave room for any reply. The Germans, in the age of Tacitus, were unacquainted with the uſe of letters [16]; and the uſe of letters is the principal circumſtance that diſtinguiſhes a civilized people from a herd of ſavages incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help, the human memory ſoon diſſipates or corrupts the ideas intruſted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer ſupplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers; the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular. Fully to apprehend this important truth, let us attempt, in an improved ſociety, to calculate the immenſe diſtance between the man of learning and the *illiterate* peaſant. The former, by reading and reflection, multiplies his own experience, and lives in diſtant ages and remote countries; whilſt the latter, rooted to a ſingle ſpot, and confined to a few years of exiſtence, ſurpaſſes, but very little, his fellow-

[16] Tacit. Germ. ii. 19. Literarum ſecreta viri pariter ac fœminæ ignorant. We may reſt contented with this deciſive authority, without entering into the obſcure diſputes concerning the antiquity of the Runic characters. The learned Celſius, a Swede, a ſcholar, and a philoſopher, was of opinion, that they were nothing more than the Roman letters, with the curves changed into ſtraight lines for the eaſe of engraving. See Pelloutier, Hiſtoire des Celtes, l. ii. c. 11. Dictionnaire Diplomatique, tom. i. p. 223. We may add, that the oldeſt Runic inſcriptions are ſuppoſed to be of the third century, and the moſt ancient writer who mentions the Runic characters is Venantius Fortunatus (Carm. vii. 18.), who lived towards the end of the ſixth century.

Barbara fraxineis pingatur RUNA tabellis.

labourer

labourer the ox in the exercise of his mental faculties. The same, and even a greater, difference will be found between nations than between individuals; and we may safely pronounce, that without some species of writing, no people has ever preserved the faithful annals of their history, ever made any considerable progress in the abstract sciences, or ever possessed, in any tolerable degree of perfection, the useful and agreeable arts of life.

of arts and agriculture;

Of these arts, the ancient Germans were wretchedly destitute. They passed their lives in a state of ignorance and poverty, which it has pleased some declaimers to dignify with the appellation of virtuous simplicity. Modern Germany is said to contain about two thousand three hundred walled towns [17]. In a much wider extent of country, the geographer Ptolemy could discover no more than ninety places, which he decorates with the name of cities [18]; though, according to our ideas, they would but ill deserve that splendid title. We can only suppose them to have been rude fortifications, constructed in the centre of the woods, and designed to secure the women, children, and cattle, whilst the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a sudden invasion [19].

[17] Recherches Philosophiques sur les Americains, tom. iii. p. 228. The author of that very curious work is, if I am not misinformed, a German by birth.

[18] The Alexandrian Geographer is often criticised by the accurate Cluverius.

[19] See Cæsar, and the learned Mr. Whitaker, in his History of Manchester, vol. i.

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But Tacitus aſſerts, as a well-known fact, that the Germans, in his time, had *no* cities[20]; and that they affected to deſpiſe the works of Roman induſtry, as places of confinement rather than of ſecurity[21]. Their edifices were not even contiguous, or formed into regular villas[22]; each barbarian fixed his independent dwelling on the ſpot to which a plain, a wood, or a ſtream of freſh water, had induced him to give the preference. Neither ſtone, nor brick, nor tiles, were employed in theſe ſlight habitations[23]. They were indeed no more than low huts of a circular figure, built of rough timber, thatched with ſtraw, and pierced at the top to leave a free paſſage for the ſmoke. In the moſt inclement winter, the hardy German was ſatisfied with a ſcanty garment made of the ſkin of ſome animal. The nations who dwelt towards the North, clothed themſelves in furs; and the women manufactured for their own uſe a coarſe kind of linen[24]. The game of various ſorts, with which the foreſts of Germany were plentifully ſtocked, ſupplied its inhabitants

20 Tacit. Germ. 15.

21 When the Germans commanded the Ubii of Cologne to caſt off the Roman yoke, and with their new freedom to reſume their ancient manners, they inſiſted on the immediate demolition of the walls of the colony. "Poſtulamus a vobis, muros coloniæ, munimenta ſervitii "detrahatis; etiam fera animalia, ſi clauſa teneas, virtutis obliviſ-"cuntur." Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 64.

22 The ſtraggling villages of Sileſia are ſeveral miles in length. See Cluver. l. i. c. 13.

23 One hundred and forty years after Tacitus, a few more regular ſtructures were erected near the Rhine and Danube. Herodian, l. vii. p. 234.

24 Tacit. Germ. 17.

with

with food and exercise[25]. Their monstrous herds of cattle, less remarkable indeed for their beauty than for their utility[26], formed the principal object of their wealth. A small quantity of corn was the only produce exacted from the earth; the use of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to the Germans; nor can we expect any improvements in agriculture from a people, whose property every year experienced a general change by a new division of the arable lands, and who, in that strange operation, avoided disputes, by suffering a great part of their territory to lie waste and without tillage[27]. CHAP. IX.

Gold, silver, and iron, were extremely scarce in Germany. Its barbarous inhabitants wanted both skill and patience to investigate those rich veins of silver, which have so liberally rewarded the attention of the princes of Brunswick and Saxony. Sweden, which now supplies Europe with iron, was equally ignorant of its own riches; and the appearance of the arms of the Germans furnished a sufficient proof how little iron they were able to bestow on what they must have deemed the noblest use of that metal. The various transactions of peace and war had introduced some Roman coins (chiefly silver) among the borderers of the Rhine and Danube; but the more distant tribes were absolutely unacquainted with the use of money, carried on their confined traffic by the exchange of commodities, and and of the use of metals.

25 Tacit. Germ. 5. 26 Cæsar. de Bell. Gall. vi. 21.
27 Tacit. Germ. 26. Cæsar, vi. 22.

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prized their rude earthen veſſels as of equal value with the ſilver vaſes, the preſents of Rome to their princes and ambaſſadors[28]. To a mind capable of reflection, ſuch leading facts convey more inſtruction, than a tedious detail of ſubordinate circumſtances. The value of money has been ſettled by general conſent to expreſs our wants and our property; as letters were invented to expreſs our ideas; and both theſe inſtitutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and paſſions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were deſigned to repreſent. The uſe of gold and ſilver is in a great meaſure factitious; but it would be impoſſible to enumerate the important and various ſervices which agriculture, and all the arts, have received from iron, when tempered and faſhioned by the operation of fire, and the dextrous hand of man. Money, in a word, is the moſt univerſal incitement, iron the moſt powerful inſtrument, of human induſtry; and it is very difficult to conceive by what means a people, neither actuated by the one, nor ſeconded by the other, could emerge from the groſſeſt barbariſm[29].

Their indolence.

If we contemplate a ſavage nation in any part of the globe, a ſupine indolence and a careleſſneſs of futurity will be found to conſtitute their general character. In a civilized ſtate, every faculty

[28] Tacit. Germ. 6.

[29] It is ſaid that the Mexicans and Peruvians, without the uſe of either money or iron, had made a very great progreſs in the arts. Thoſe arts, and the monuments they produced, have been ſtrangely magnified. See Recherches ſur les Americains, tom. ii. p. 153, &c.

of man is expanded and exerciſed; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the ſeveral members of ſociety. The moſt numerous portion of it is employed in conſtant and uſeful labour. The ſelect few, placed by fortune above that neceſſity, can, however, fill up their time by the purſuits of intereſt or glory, by the improvement of their eſtate or of their underſtanding, by the duties, the pleaſures, and even the follies of ſocial life. The Germans were not poſſeſſed of theſe varied reſources. The care of the houſe and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and ſlaves. The lazy warrior, deſtitute of every art that might employ his leiſure hours, conſumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of ſleep and food. And yet, by a wonderful diverſity of Nature (according to the remark of a writer who had pierced into its darkeſt receſſes), the ſame barbarians are by turns the moſt indolent and the moſt reſtleſs of mankind. They delight in ſloth, they deteſt tranquillity [30]. The languid ſoul, oppreſſed with its own weight, anxiouſly required ſome new and powerful ſenſation; and war and danger were the only amuſements adequate to its fierce temper. The ſound that ſummoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It rouſed him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active purſuit, and, by ſtrong exerciſe of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, reſtored him to a

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[30] Tacit. Germ. 15.

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more lively ſenſe of his exiſtence. In the dull intervals of peace, theſe barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and exceſſive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their paſſions, the other by extinguiſhing their reaſon, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in paſſing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often ſtained their numerous and drunken aſſemblies [31]. Their debts of honour (for in that light they have tranſmitted to us thoſe of play) they diſcharged with the moſt romantic fidelity. The deſperate gameſter, who had ſtaked his perſon and liberty on a laſt throw of the dice, patiently ſubmitted to the deciſion of fortune, and ſuffered himſelf to be bound, chaſtiſed, and ſold into remote ſlavery, by his weaker but more lucky antagoniſt [32].

Their taſte for ſtrong liquors.

Strong beer, a liquor extracted with very little art from wheat or barley, and *corrupted* (as it is ſtrongly expreſſed by Tacitus) into a certain ſemblance of wine, was ſufficient for the groſs purpoſes of German debauchery. But thoſe who had taſted the rich wines of Italy, and afterwards of Gaul, ſighed for that more delicious ſpecies of intoxication. They attempted not, however (as has ſince been executed with ſo much ſucceſs), to naturalize the vine on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; nor did they endeavour to procure

[31] Tacit. Germ. 22, 23.

[32] Id. 24. The Germans might borrow the *arts* of play from the Romans, but the *paſſion* is wonderfully inherent in the human ſpecies.

by

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by induſtry the materials of an advantageous commerce. To ſolicit by labour what might be ravithed by arms, was eſteemed unworthy of the German ſpirit [33]. The intemperate thirſt of ſtrong liquors often urged the barbarians to invade the provinces on which art or nature had beſtowed thoſe much envied preſents. The Tuſcan who betrayed his country to the Celtic nations, attracted them into Italy by the proſpect of the rich fruits and delicious wines, the productions of a happier climate [34]. And in the ſame manner the German auxiliaries, invited into France during the civil wars of the ſixteenth century, were allured by the promiſe of plenteous quarters in the provinces of Champaigne and Burgundy [35]. Drunkenneſs, the moſt illiberal, but not the moſt dangerous, of *our* vices, was ſometimes capable, in a leſs civilized ſtate of mankind, of occaſioning a battle, a war, or a revolution.

State of population.

The climate of ancient Germany has been mollified, and the ſoil fertilized, by the labour of ten centuries from the time of Charlemagne. The ſame extent of ground which at preſent maintains, in eaſe and plenty, a million of huſbandmen and artificers, was unable to ſupply an hundred thouſand lazy warriors with the ſimple neceſſaries of life [36]. The Germans abandoned their immenſe

33 Tacit. Germ. 14.

34 Plutarch. in Camillo. T. Liv. v. 33.

35 Dubos. Hiſt. de la Monarchie Françoiſe, tom. i. p. 193.

36 The Helvetian nation, which iſſued from the country called Switzerland, contained, of every age and ſex, 368,000 perſons. (Cæſar

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immenſe foreſts to the exerciſe of hunting, employed in paſturage the moſt conſiderable part of their lands, beſtowed on the ſmall remainder a rude and careleſs cultivation, and then accuſed the ſcantineſs and ſterility of a country that refuſed to maintain the multitude of its inhabitants. When the return of famine ſeverely admoniſhed them of the importance of the arts, the national diſtreſs was ſometimes alleviated by the emigration of a third, perhaps, or a fourth part of their youth [37]. The poſſeſſion and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilized people to an improved country. But the Germans, who carried with them what they moſt valued, their arms, their cattle, and their women, cheerfully abandoned the vaſt ſilence of their woods for the unbounded hopes of plunder and conqueſt. The innumerable ſwarms that iſſued, or ſeemed to iſſue, from the great ſtorehouſe of nations, were multiplied by the fears of the vanquiſhed, and by the credulity of ſucceeding ages. And from facts thus exaggerated, an opinion was gradually eſtabliſhed, and has been ſupported by writers of diſtinguiſhed reputation, that, in the age of Cæſar and Tacitus, the inhabitants of the North were far more numerous than they are in

(Cæſar de Bell. Gall. i. 29.). At preſent, the number of people in the Pays de Vaud (a ſmall diſtrict on the banks of the Leman Lake, much more diſtinguiſhed for politeneſs than for induſtry) amounts to 112,591. See an excellent tract of M. Muret, in the Memoires de la Societé de Bern.

37 Paul Diaconus, c. 1, 2, 3. Machiavel, Davila, and the reſt of Paul's followers, repreſent theſe emigrations too much as regular and concerted meaſures.

our

our days[38]. A more ſerious inquiry into the cauſes of population ſeems to have convinced modern philoſophers of the falſehood, and indeed the impoſſibility, of the ſuppoſition. To the names of Mariana and of Machiavel[39], we can oppoſe the equal names of Robertſon and Hume[40].

German freedom.

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found ſome compenſation for this ſavage ſtate in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty ſecured their freedom, ſince our deſires and our poſſeſſions are the ſtrongeſt fetters of deſpotiſm. "Among "the Suiones (ſays Tacitus), riches are held in "honour. They are *therefore* ſubject to an ab- "ſolute monarch, who, inſtead of intruſting his "people with the free uſe of arms, as is practiſed "in the reſt of Germany, commits them to the "ſafe cuſtody not of a citizen, or even of a "freedman, but of a ſlave. The neighbours of "the Suiones, the Sitones, are ſunk even below "ſervitude; they obey a woman[41]." In the mention of theſe exceptions, the great hiſtorian ſufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government. We are only at a loſs to conceive by what means riches and deſpotiſm could pene-

[38] Sir William Temple and Monteſquieu have indulged, on this ſubject, the uſual liveline ſs of their fancy.

[39] Machiavel Hiſt. di Firenze, l. i. Mariana Hiſt. Hiſpan. l. v. c. 1.

[40] Robertſon's Charles V. Hume's Political Eſſays.

[41] Tacit. German. 44, 45. Frenſhemius (who dedicated his ſupplement to Livy, to Chriſtina of Sweden) thinks proper to be very angry with the Roman who expreſſed ſo very little reverence for Northern queens.

trate

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trate into a remote corner of the North, and extinguiſh the generous flame that blazed with ſuch fierceneſs on the frontier of the Roman provinces: or how the anceſtors of thoſe Danes and Norwegians, ſo diſtinguiſhed in latter ages by their unconquered ſpirit, could thus tamely reſign the great character of German liberty [42]. Some tribes, however, on the coaſt of the Baltic, acknowledged the authority of kings, though without relinquiſhing the rights of men [43]; but in the far greater part of Germany, the form of government was a democracy, tempered indeed, and controlled, not ſo much by general and poſitive laws, as by the occaſional aſcendant of birth or valour, of eloquence or ſuperſtition [44].

Aſſemblies of the people.

Civil governments, in their firſt inſtitutions, are voluntary aſſociations for mutual defence. To obtain the deſired end, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that each individual ſhould conceive himſelf obliged to ſubmit his private opinion and actions, to the judgment of the greater number of his aſſociates. The German tribes were contented with this rude but liberal outline of political ſociety. As ſoon as a youth, born of free parents, had attained the age of manhood, he was intro-

[42] May we not ſuſpect that ſuperſtition was the parent of deſpotiſm? The deſcendants of Odin (whoſe race was not extinct till the year 1060) are ſaid to have reigned in Sweden above a thouſand years. The temple of Upſal was the ancient ſeat of religion and empire. In the year 1153 I find a ſingular law, prohibiting the uſe and profeſſion of arms to any except the king's guards. Is it not probable that it was coloured by the pretence of reviving an old inſtitution? See Dallin's Hiſtory of Sweden in the Bibliothéque Raiſonnée, tom. xl. and xlv.

[43] Tacit. Germ. c. 43.

[44] Id. c. 11, 12, 13, &c.

duced

duced into the general council of his countrymen, ſolemnly inveſted with a ſhield and ſpear, and adopted as an equal and worthy member of the military commonwealth. The aſſembly of the warriors of the tribe was convened at ſtated ſeaſons, or on ſudden emergencies. The trial of public offences, the election of magiſtrates, and the great buſineſs of peace and war, were determined by its independent voice. Sometimes, indeed, theſe important queſtions were previouſly conſidered, and prepared in a more ſelect council of the principal chieftains [45]. The magiſtrates might deliberate and perſuade, the people only could reſolve and execute; and the reſolutions of the Germans were for the moſt part haſty and violent. Barbarians accuſtomed to place their freedom in gratifying the preſent paſſion, and their courage in overlooking all future conſequences, turned away with indignant contempt from the remonſtrances of juſtice and policy, and it was the practice to ſignify by a hollow murmur their diſlike of ſuch timid counſels. But whenever a more popular orator propoſed to vindicate the meaneſt citizen from either foreign or domeſtic injury, whenever he called upon his fellow-countrymen to aſſert the national honour, or to purſue ſome enterpriſe full of danger and glory, a loud claſhing of ſhields and ſpears expreſſed the eager applauſe of the aſſembly. For the Germans always met CHAP. IX.

45 Grotius changes an expreſſion of Tacitus, *pertractantur* into *prætractantur*. The correction is equally juſt and ingenious.

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in arms, and it was conſtantly to be dreaded, leſt an irregular multitude, inflamed with faction and ſtrong liquors, ſhould uſe thoſe arms to enforce, as well as to declare, their furious reſolves. We may recollect how often the diets of Poland have been polluted with blood, and the more numerous party has been compelled to yield to the more violent and ſeditious [46].

Authority of the princes and magiſtrates

A general of the tribe was elected on occaſions of danger; and, if the danger was preſſing and extenſive, ſeveral tribes concurred in the choice of the ſame general. The braveſt warrior was named to lead his countrymen into the field, by his example rather than by his commands. But this power, however limited, was ſtill invidious. It expired with the war, and in time of peace the German tribes acknowledged not any ſupreme chief [47]. *Princes* were, however, appointed in the general aſſembly, to adminiſter juſtice, or rather, to compoſe differences [48], in their reſpective diſtricts. In the choice of theſe magiſtrates, as much regard was ſhewn to birth as to merit [49]. To each was aſſigned, by the public, a guard, and a council of an hundred perſons; and the firſt of the princes appears to have enjoyed a pre-eminence of rank and honour

46 Even in *our* ancient parliament, the barons often carried a queſtion, not ſo much by the number of votes, as by that of their armed followers.

47 Cæſar de Bell. Gall. vi. 23.

48 Minuunt controverſias, is a very happy expreſſion of Cæſar's.

49 Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute ſumunt. Tacit. Germ. 7.

which

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which ſometimes tempted the Romans to compliment him with the regal title [50].

more abſolute over the property than over the perſons of the Germans.

The comparative view of the powers of the magiſtrates, in two remarkable inſtances, is alone ſufficient to repreſent the whole ſyſtem of German manners. The diſpoſal of the landed property within their diſtrict was abſolutely veſted in their hands, and they diſtributed it every year according to a new diviſion [51]. At the ſame time they were not authoriſed to puniſh with death, to impriſon, or even to ſtrike, a private citizen [52]. A people thus jealous of their perſons, and careleſs of their poſſeſſions, muſt have been totally deſtitute of induſtry and the arts, but animated with a high ſenſe of honour and independence.

Voluntary engagements.

The Germans reſpected only thoſe duties which they impoſed on themſelves. The moſt obſcure ſoldier reſiſted with diſdain the authority of the magiſtrates. "The nobleſt youths bluſhed not "to be numbered among the faithful compa- "nions of ſome renowned chief, to whom they "devoted their arms and ſervice. A noble "emulation prevailed among the companions, to "obtain the firſt place in the eſteem of their "chief; amongſt the chiefs, to acquire the greateſt "number of valiant companions. To be ever "ſurrounded by a band of ſelect youths, was "the pride and ſtrength of the chiefs, their orna- "ment in peace, their defence in war. The

50 Cluver. Germ. Ant. l. i. c. 38.
51 Cæſar, vi. 22. Tacit. Germ. 26.
52 Tacit. Germ. 7.

"glory

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" glory of ſuch diſtinguiſhed heroes diffuſed itſelf " beyond the narrow limits of their own tribe. " Preſents and embaſſies ſolicited their friend- " ſhip, and the fame of their arms often enſured " victory to the party which they eſpouſed. " In the hour of danger it was ſhameful for the " chief to be ſurpaſſed in valour by his com- " panions; ſhameful for the companions not to " equal the valour of their chief. To ſurvive " his fall in battle, was indelible infamy. To " protect his perſon, and to adorn his glory " with the trophies of their own exploits, were " the moſt ſacred of their duties. The chiefs " combated for victory, the companions for the " chief. The nobleſt warriors, whenever their " native country was ſunk in the lazineſs of " peace, maintained their numerous bands in " ſome diſtant ſcene of action, to exerciſe their " reſtleſs ſpirit, and to acquire renown by vo- " luntary dangers. Gifts worthy of ſoldiers, the " warlike ſteed, the bloody and ever victorious " lance, were the rewards which the companions " claimed from the liberality of their chief. " The rude plenty of his hoſpitable board was " the only pay that *he* could beſtow, or *they* " would accept. War, rapine, and the free- " will offerings of his friends, ſupplied the ma- " terials of this munificence[53]." This inſtitution, however it might accidentally weaken the ſeveral republics, invigorated the general character of the Germans, and even ripened amongſt

[53] Tacit. Germ. 13, 14.

them

them all the virtues of which barbarians are ſuſceptible; the faith and valour, the hoſpitality and the courteſy, ſo conſpicuous long afterwards in the ages of chivalry. The honourable gifts, beſtowed by the chief on his brave companions, have been ſuppoſed, by an ingenious writer, to contain the firſt rudiments of the fiefs, diſtributed, after the conqueſt of the Roman provinces, by the barbarian lords among their vaſſals, with a ſimilar duty of homage and military ſervice [54]. Theſe conditions are, however, very repugnant to the maxims of the ancient Germans, who delighted in mutual preſents; but without either impoſing, or accepting, the weight of obligations [55].

German chaſtity.

"In the days of chivalry, or more properly of "romance, all the men were brave, and all the "women were chaſte;" and notwithſtanding the latter of theſe virtues is acquired and preſerved with much more difficulty than the former, it is aſcribed, almoſt without exception, to the wives of the ancient Germans. Polygamy was not in uſe, except among the princes, and among them only for the ſake of multiplying their alliances. Divorces were prohibited by manners rather than by laws. Adulteries were puniſhed as rare and inexpiable crimes; nor was

54 Eſprit des Loix, l. xxx. c. 3. The brilliant imagination of Monteſquieu is corrected, however, by the dry cold reaſon of the Abbé de Mably. Obſervations ſur l'Hiſtoire de France, tom. i. p. 356.

55 Gaudent muneribus, ſed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur. Tacit. Germ. c. 21.

ſeduc-

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ſeduction juſtified by example and faſhion[56]. We may eaſily diſcover, that Tacitus indulges an honeſt pleaſure in the contraſt of barbarian virtue with the diſſolute conduct of the Roman ladies; yet there are ſome ſtriking circumſtances that give an air of truth, or at leaſt of probability, to the conjugal faith and chaſtity of the Germans.

Its probable cauſes.

Although the progreſs of civilization has undoubtedly contributed to aſſuage the fiercer paſſions of human nature, it ſeems to have been leſs favourable to the virtue of chaſtity, whoſe moſt dangerous enemy is the ſoftneſs of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they poliſh the intercourſe of the ſexes. The groſs appetite of love becomes moſt dangerous when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, diſguiſed by ſentimental paſſion. The elegance of dreſs, of motion, and of manners, gives a luſtre to beauty, and inflames the ſenſes through the imagination. Luxurious entertainments, midnight dances, and licentious ſpectacles, preſent at once temptation and opportunity to female frailty[57]. From ſuch dangers the unpoliſhed wives of the barbarians were ſecured by poverty, ſolitude, and the painful cares of a domeſtic life. The German huts, open, on every ſide, to the eye of indiſcretion or

[56] The adultereſs was whipped through the village. Neither wealth nor beauty could inſpire compaſſion, or procure her a ſecond huſband, 18, 19.

[57] Ovid employs two hundred lines in the reſearch of places the moſt favourable to love. Above all, he conſiders the theatre as the beſt adapted to collect the beauties of Rome, and to melt them into tenderneſs and ſenſuality.

jealouſy,

jealouſy, were a better ſafeguard of conjugal fidelity, than the walls, the bolts, and the eunuchs of a Perſian haram. To this reaſon, another may be added, of a more honourable nature. The Germans treated their women with eſteem and confidence, conſulted them on every occaſion of importance, and fondly believed, that in their breaſts reſided a ſanctity and wiſdom more than human. Some of theſe interpreters of fate, ſuch as Velleda, in the Batavian war, governed, in the name of the deity, the fierceſt nations of Germany [58]. The reſt of the ſex, without being adored as goddeſſes, were reſpected as the free and equal companions of ſoldiers; aſſociated, even by the marriage ceremony, to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory [59]. In their great invaſions, the camps of the barbarians were filled with a multitude of women, who remained firm and undaunted amidſt the ſound of arms, the various forms of deſtruction, and the honourable wounds of their ſons and huſbands [60]. Fainting armies of Germans have more than once been driven back upon the enemy, by the generous deſpair of the women, who dreaded death much leſs than ſervitude. If the day was irrecoverably loſt, they well knew how to deliver themſelves and their children, with their own hands, from CHAP. IX.

58 Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 61. 65.

59 The marriage preſent was a yoke of oxen, horſes, and arms. See Germ. c. 18. Tacitus is ſomewhat too florid on the ſubject.

60 The change of *exigere* into *augere* is a moſt excellent correction.

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an inſulting victor[61]. Heroines of ſuch a caſt may claim our admiration; but they were moſt aſſuredly neither lovely, nor very ſuſceptible of love. Whilſt they affected to emulate the ſtern virtues of *man*, they muſt have reſigned that attractive ſoftneſs in which principally conſiſts the charm and weakneſs of *woman*. Conſcious pride taught the German females to ſuppreſs every tender emotion that ſtood in competition with honour, and the firſt honour of the ſex has ever been that of chaſtity. The ſentiments and conduct of theſe high-ſpirited matrons may, at once, be conſidered as a cauſe, as an effect, and as a proof of the general character of the nation. Female courage, however it may be raiſed by fanaticiſm, or confirmed by habit, can be only a faint and imperfect imitation of the manly valour that diſtinguiſhes the age or country in which it may be found.

Religion.

The religious ſyſtem of the Germans (if the wild opinions of ſavages can deſerve that name) was dictated by their wants, their fears, and their ignorance[62]. They adored the great viſible objects and agents of nature, the Sun and the

[61] Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Plutarch. in Mario. Before the wives of the Teutones deſtroyed themſelves and their children, they had offered to ſurrender, on condition that they ſhould be received as the ſlaves of the veſtal virgins.

[62] Tacitus has employed a few lines, and Cluverius one hundred and twenty-four pages, on this obſcure ſubject. The former diſcovers in Germany the gods of Greece and Rome. The latter is poſitive, that under the emblems of the ſun, the moon, and the fire, his pious anceſtors worſhipped the Trinity in unity.

Moon,

Moon, the Fire and the Earth; together with those imaginary deities, who were supposed to preside over the most important occupations of human life. They were persuaded, that, by some ridiculous arts of divination, they could discover the will of the superiour beings, and that human sacrifices were the most precious and acceptable offering to their altars. Some applause has been hastily bestowed on the sublime notion, entertained by that people, of the Deity, whom they neither confined within the walls of a temple, nor represented by any human figure; but when we recollect, that the Germans were unskilled in architecture, and totally unacquainted with the art of sculpture, we shall readily assign the true reason of a scruple, which arose not so much from a superiority of reason, as from a want of ingenuity. The only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, consecrated by the reverence of succeeding generations. Their secret gloom, the imagined residence of an invisible power, by presenting no distinct object of fear or worship, impressed the mind with a still deeper sense of religious horror [63]; and the priests, rude and illiterate as they were, had been taught by experience the use of every artifice that could preserve and fortify impressions so well suited to their own interest.

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[63] The sacred wood, described with such sublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles; but there were many of the same kind in Germany.

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Its effects in peace,

The ſame ignorance which renders barbarians incapable of conceiving or embracing the uſeful reſtraints of laws, expoſes them naked and unarmed to the blind terrors of ſuperſtition. The German prieſts, improving this favourable temper of their countrymen, had aſſumed a juriſdiction, even in temporal concerns, which the magiſtrate could not venture to exerciſe; and the haughty warrior patiently ſubmitted to the laſh of correction, when it was inflicted, not by any human power, but by the immediate order of the god of war [64]. The defects of civil policy were ſometimes ſupplied by the interpoſition of eccleſiaſtical authority. The latter was conſtantly exerted to maintain ſilence and decency in the popular aſſemblies; and was ſometimes extended to a more enlarged concern for the national welfare. A ſolemn proceſſion was occaſionally celebrated in the preſent countries of Mecklenburgh and Pomerania. The unknown ſymbol of the *Earth*, covered with a thick veil, was placed on a carriage drawn by cows; and in this manner the goddeſs, whoſe common reſidence was in the iſle of Rugen, viſited ſeveral adjacent tribes of her worſhippers. During her progreſs, the ſound of war was huſhed, quarrels were ſuſpended, arms laid aſide, and the reſtleſs Germans had an opportunity of taſting the bleſſings of peace and harmony [65]. The *truce of God*, ſo often and ſo ineffectually proclaimed by the

[64] Tacit. Germania, c. 7. [65] Tacit. Germania, c. 40.

clergy

clergy of the eleventh century, was an obvious imitation of this ancient cuſtom [66]. CHAP. IX.

But the influence of religion was far more powerful to inflame, than to moderate, the fierce paſſions of the Germans. Intereſt and fanaticiſm often prompted its miniſters to ſanctify the moſt daring and the moſt unjuſt enterpriſes, by the approbation of Heaven, and full aſſurances of ſucceſs. The conſecrated ſtandards, long revered in the groves of ſuperſtition, were placed in the front of the battle [67]; and the hoſtile army was devoted with dire execrations to the gods of war and of thunder [68]. In the faith of ſoldiers (and ſuch were the Germans) cowardice is the moſt unpardonable of ſins. A brave man was the worthy favourite of their martial deities; the wretch who had loſt his ſhield, was alike baniſhed from the religious and the civil aſſemblies of his countrymen. Some tribes of the north ſeem to have embraced the doctrine of tranſmigration [69], others imagined a groſs paradiſe of immortal drunkenneſs [70]. All agreed, that a life ſpent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the beſt preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world. in war.

66 See Dr. Robertſon's Hiſtory of Charles V. vol. i. note 10.

67 Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Theſe ſtandards were only the heads of wild beaſts.

68 See an inſtance of this cuſtom, Tacit. Annal. xiii. 57.

69 Cæſar, Diodorus, and Lucan, ſeem to aſcribe this doctrine to the Gauls, but M. Pelloutier (Hiſtoire des Celtes, l. iii. c. 18.) labours to reduce their expreſſions to a more orthodox ſenſe.

70 Concerning this groſs but alluring doctrine of the Edda, ſee Fable xx. in the curious verſion of that book, publiſhed by M. Mallet, in his Introduction to the Hiſtory of Denmark.

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The bards.

The immortality ſo vainly promiſed by the prieſts, was in ſome degree conferred by the bards. That ſingular order of men has moſt deſervedly attracted the notice of all who have attempted to inveſtigate the antiquities of the Celts, the Scandinavians, and the Germans. Their genius and character, as well as the reverence paid to that important office, have been ſufficiently illuſtrated. But we cannot ſo eaſily expreſs, or even conceive, the enthuſiaſm of arms and glory which they kindled in the breaſt of their audience. Among a poliſhed people, a taſte for poetry is rather an amuſement of the fancy, than a paſſion of the ſoul. And yet, when in calm retirement we peruſe the combats deſcribed by Homer or Taſſo, we are inſenſibly ſeduced by the fiction, and feel a momentary glow of martial ardour. But how faint, how cold is the ſenſation which a peaceful mind can receive from ſolitary ſtudy! It was in the hour of battle, or in the feaſt of victory, that the bards celebrated the glory of heroes of ancient days, the anceſtors of thoſe warlike chieftains who liſtened with tranſport to their artleſs but animated ſtrains. The view of arms and of danger heightened the effect of the military ſong; and the paſſions which it tended to excite, the deſire of fame, and the contempt of death, were the habitual ſentiments of a German mind [71].

Such

[71] See Tacit. Germ. c. 3. Diodor. Sicul. l. v. Strabo, l. iv. p. 197. The claſſical reader may remember the rank of Demodocus in

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Such was the ſituation, and ſuch were the manners, of the ancient Germans. Their climate, their want of learning, of arts, and of laws, their notions of honour, of gallantry, and of religion, their ſenſe of freedom, impatience of peace, and thirſt of enterpriſe, all contributed to form a people of military heroes. And yet we find, that, during more than two hundred and fifty years that elapſed from the defeat of Varus to the reign of Decius, theſe formidable barbarians made few conſiderable attempts, and not any material impreſſion, on the luxurious and enſlaved provinces of the empire. Their progreſs was checked by their want of arms and diſcipline, and their fury was diverted by the inteſtine diviſions of ancient Germany.

Cauſes which checked the progreſs of the Germans.

I. It has been obſerved, with ingenuity, and not without truth, that the command of iron ſoon gives a nation the command of gold. But the rude tribes of Germany, alike deſtitute of both thoſe valuable metals, were reduced ſlowly to acquire, by their unaſſiſted ſtrength, the poſſeſſion of the one as well as the other. The face of a German army diſplayed their poverty of iron. Swords, and the longer kind of lances, they could ſeldom uſe. Their *frameæ* (as they called them in their own language) were long ſpears headed with a ſharp but narrow iron point,

Want of arms

in the Phæacian court, and the ardour infuſed by Tyrtæus into the fainting Spartans. Yet there is little probability that the Greeks and the Germans were the ſame people. Much learned trifling might be ſpared, if our antiquarians would condeſcend to reflect, that ſimilar manners will naturally be produced by ſimilar ſituations.

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and which, as occaſion required, they either darted from a diſtance, or puſhed in cloſe onſet. With this ſpear, and with a ſhield, their cavalry was contented. A multitude of darts, ſcattered [72] with incredible force, were an additional reſource of the infantry. Their military dreſs, when they wore any, was nothing more than a looſe mantle. A variety of colours was the only ornament of their wooden or oſier ſhields. Few of the chiefs were diſtinguiſhed by cuiraſſes, ſcarce any by helmets. Though the horſes of Germany were neither beautiful, ſwift, nor practiſed in the ſkilful evolutions of the Roman manage, ſeveral of the nations obtained renown by their cavalry; but, in general, the principal ſtrength of the Germans conſiſted in their infantry [73], which was drawn up in ſeveral deep columns, according to the diſtinction of tribes and families. Impatient of fatigue or delay, theſe half-armed warriors ruſhed to battle with diſſonant ſhouts and diſordered ranks; and ſometimes, by the effort of native valour, prevailed over the conſtrained and more artificial bravery of the Roman mercenaries. But as the barbarians poured forth their whole ſouls on the firſt onſet, they knew not how to rally or to retire. A repulſe was a ſure defeat; and a defeat was moſt commonly total deſtruction. When we

and of diſcipline.

[72] Miſſilia ſpargunt, Tacit. Germ. c. 6. Either that hiſtorian uſed a vague expreſſion, or he meant that they were thrown at random.

[73] It was their principal diſtinction from the Sarmatians, who generally fought on horſeback.

recollect

recollect the complete armour of the Roman ſoldiers, their diſcipline, exerciſes, evolutions, fortified camps, and military engines, it appears a juſt matter of ſurpriſe, how the naked and unaſſiſted valour of the barbarians could dare to encounter in the field, the ſtrength of the legions, and the various troops of the auxiliaries, which ſeconded their operations. The conteſt was too unequal, till the introduction of luxury had enervated the vigour, and a ſpirit of diſobedience and ſedition had relaxed the diſcipline, of the Roman armies. The introduction of barbarian auxiliaries into thoſe armies, was a meaſure attended with very obvious dangers, as it might gradually inſtruct the Germans in the arts of war and of policy. Although they were admitted in ſmall numbers and with the ſtricteſt precaution, the example of Civilis was proper to convince the Romans, that the danger was not imaginary, and that their precautions were not always ſufficient [74]. During the civil wars that followed the death of Nero, that artful and intrepid Batavian, whom his enemies condeſcended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius [75], formed a great deſign of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his ſtandard. He introduced an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed

74 The relation of this enterpriſe occupies a great part of the fourth and fifth books of the Hiſtory of Tacitus, and is more remarkable for its eloquence than perſpicuity. Sir Henry Saville has obſerved ſeveral inaccuracies.

75 Tacit. Hiſt. iv. 13. Like them he had loſt an eye.

on

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on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to embrace his cauſe, defeated the legions, deſtroyed their fortified camps, and employed againſt the Romans the military knowledge which he had acquired in their ſervice. When at length, after an obſtinate ſtruggle, he yielded to the power of the empire, Civilis ſecured himſelf and his country by an honourable treaty. The Batavians ſtill continued to occupy the iſlands of the Rhine [76], the allies, not the ſervants, of the Roman monarchy.

Civil diſſentions of Germany

II. The ſtrength of ancient Germany appears formidable, when we conſider the effects that might have been produced by its united effort. The wide extent of country might very poſſibly contain a million of warriours, as all who were of age to bear arms were of a temper to uſe them. But this fierce multitude, incapable of concerting or executing any plan of national greatneſs, was agitated by various and often hoſtile intentions. Germany was divided into more than forty independent ſtates; and, even in each ſtate, the union of the ſeveral tribes was extremely looſe and precarious. The barbarians were eaſily provoked; they knew not how to forgive an injury, much leſs an inſult; their reſentments were bloody and implacable. The caſual diſputes that ſo frequently happened in their tumultuous parties of hunting or drinking, were ſufficient to

[76] It was contained between the two branches of the old Rhine, as they ſubſiſted before the face of the country was changed by art and nature. See Cluver. German. Antiq. l. iii. c. 30. 37.

inflame

inflame the minds of whole nations; the private feud of any conſiderable chieftains diffuſed itſelf among their followers and allies. To chaſtiſe the inſolent, or to plunder the defenceleſs, were alike cauſes of war. The moſt formidable ſtates of Germany affected to encompaſs their territories with a wide frontier of ſolitude and devaſtation. The awful diſtance preſerved by their neighbours, atteſted the terror of their arms, and in ſome meaſure defended them from the danger of unexpected incurſions [77]. CHAP. IX.

"The Bructeri (it is Tacitus who now ſpeaks) "were totally exterminated by the neighbouring "tribes [78], provoked by their inſolence, allured "by the hopes of ſpoil, and perhaps inſpired by "the tutelar deities of the empire. Above ſixty "thouſand barbarians were deſtroyed; not by "the Roman arms, but in our ſight, and for "our entertainment. May the nations, enemies "of Rome, ever preſerve this enmity to each "other! We have now attained the utmoſt "verge of proſperity [79], and have nothing left "to demand of Fortune, except the diſcord of "theſe barbarians [80]." Theſe ſentiments, leſs fomented by the policy of Rome.

77 Cæſar de Bell. Gall. l. vi. 23.

78 They are mentioned however in the ivth and vth centuries by Nazarius, Ammianus, Claudian, &c. as a tribe of Franks. See Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii. c. 13.

79 *Urgentibus* is the common reading, but good ſenſe, Lipſius, and ſome MSS. declare for *Vergentibus*.

80 Tacit. Germania, c. 33. The pious Abbé de la Bleterie is very angry with Tacitus, talks of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning, &c. &c.

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worthy of the humanity than of the patriotiſm of Tacitus, expreſs the invariable maxims of the policy of his countrymen. They deemed it a much ſafer expedient to divide than to combat the barbarians, from whoſe defeat they could derive neither honour nor advantage. The money and negociations of Rome inſinuated themſelves into the heart of Germany; and every art of ſeduction was uſed with dignity, to conciliate thoſe nations whom their proximity to the Rhine or Danube might render the moſt uſeful friends, as well as the moſt troubleſome enemies. Chiefs of renown and power were flattered by the moſt trifling preſents, which they received either as marks of diſtinction, or as the inſtruments of luxury. In civil diſſentions, the weaker faction endeavoured to ſtrengthen its intereſt by entering into ſecret connexions with the governors of the frontier provinces. Every quarrel among the Germans was fomented by the intrigues of Rome; and every plan of union and public good was defeated by the ſtronger bias of private jealouſy and intereſt [81].

Tranſient union againſt Marcus Antoninus.

The general conſpiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus, comprehended almoſt all the nations of Germany, and even Sarmatia, from the mouth of the Rhine

[81] Many traces of this policy may be diſcovered in Tacitus and Dion; and many more may be inferred from the principles of human nature.

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to that of the Danube[82]. It is impoſſible for us to determine whether this haſty confederation was formed by neceſſity, by reaſon, or by paſſion; but we may reſt aſſured, that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence, or provoked by the ambition, of the Roman monarch. This dangerous invaſion required all the firmneſs and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed generals of ability in the ſeveral ſtations of attack, and aſſumed in perſon the conduct of the moſt important province on the Upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the ſpirit of the barbarians was ſubdued. The Quadi and the Marcomanni[83], who had taken the lead in the war, were the moſt ſeverely puniſhed in its cataſtrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles[84] from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of the youth, who were immediately ſent into Britain, a remote iſland, where they might be ſecure as hoſtages, and uſeful as ſoldiers[85]. On the frequent rebellions of the Quadi and Marcomanni, the irritated emperor reſolved to reduce their country

[82] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 31. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxxi. c. 5. Aurel. Victor. The emperor Marcus was reduced to ſell the rich furniture of the palace, and to inliſt ſlaves and robbers.

[83] The Marcomanni, a colony, who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had once erected a great and formidable monarchy under their king Maroboduus. See Strabo, l. vii. Vell. Pat. ii. 105. Tacit. Annal. ii. 63.

[84] Mr. Wotton (Hiſtory of Rome, p. 166.) increaſes the prohibition to ten times the diſtance. His reaſoning is ſpecious, but not concluſive. Five miles were ſufficient for a fortified barrier.

[85] Dion, l. lxxi. and lxxii.

into

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into the form of a province. His designs were disappointed by death. This formidable league, however, the only one that appears in the two first centuries of the Imperial history, was entirely dissipated, without leaving any traces behind in Germany.

Distinction of the German tribes.

In the course of this introductory chapter, we have confined ourselves to the general outlines of the manners of Germany, without attempting to describe or to distinguish the various tribes which filled that great country in the time of Cæsar, of Tacitus, or of Ptolemy. As the ancient, or as new tribes successively present themselves in the series of this history, we shall concisely mention their origin, their situation, and their particular character. Modern nations are fixed and permanent societies, connected among themselves by laws and government, bound to their native soil by arts and agriculture. The German tribes were voluntary and fluctuating associations of soldiers, almost of savages. The same territory often changed its inhabitants in the tide of conquest and emigration. The same communities, uniting in a plan of defence or invasion, bestowed a new title on their new confederacy. The dissolution of an ancient confederacy, restored to the independent tribes their peculiar but long forgotten appellation. A victorious state often communicated its own name to a vanquished people. Sometimes crowds of volunteers flocked from all parts to the standard of a favourite leader; his camp became their country, and some circumstance of the enterprise soon gave a common

mon denomination to the mixed multitude. The distinctions of the ferocious invaders were perpetually varied by themselves, and confounded by the astonished subjects of the Roman empire [86].

Numbers.

Wars, and the administration of public affairs, are the principal subjects of history; but the number of persons interested in these busy scenes, is very different, according to the different condition of mankind. In great monarchies, millions of obedient subjects pursue their useful occupations in peace and obscurity. The attention of the Writer, as well as of the Reader, is solely confined to a court, a capital, a regular army, and the districts which happen to be the occasional scene of military operations. But a state of freedom and barbarism, the season of civil commotions, or the situation of petty republics [87], raises almost every member of the community into action, and consequently into notice. The irregular divisions, and the restless motions, of the people of Germany, dazzle our imagination, and seem to multiply their numbers. The profuse enumeration of kings and warriors, of armies and nations, inclines us to forget that the same objects are continually repeated under a variety of appellations, and that the most splendid appellations have been frequently lavished on the most inconsiderable objects.

[86] See an excellent dissertation on the origin and migrations of nations; in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii. p. 48—71. It is seldom that the antiquarian and the philosopher are so happily blended.

[87] Should we suspect that Athens contained only 21,000 citizens, and Sparta no more than 39,000? See Hume and Wallace on the number of mankind in ancient and modern times.

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The Emperors Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus.—The general Irruption of the Barbarians.—The thirty Tyrants.

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The nature of the ſubject. A. D. 248—268.

FROM the great ſecular games celebrated by Philip to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapſed twenty years of ſhame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every inſtant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire ſeemed to approach the laſt and fatal moment of its diſſolution. The confuſion of the times, and the ſcarcity of authentic memorials, oppoſe equal difficulties to the hiſtorian, who attempts to preſerve a clear and unbroken thread of narration. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always conciſe, often obſcure, and ſometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture: and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the ſure operation of its fierce and unreſtrained paſſions, might, on ſome occaſions, ſupply the want of hiſtorical materials.

The emperor Philip.

There is not, for inſtance, any difficulty in conceiving, that the ſucceſſive murders of ſo many emperors had looſened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all

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the generals of Philip were diſpoſed to imitate the example of their maſter; and that the caprice of armies, long ſince habituated to frequent and violent revolutions, might every day raiſe to the throne the moſt obſcure of their fellow-ſoldiers. Hiſtory can only add, that the rebellion againſt the emperor Philip broke out in the ſummer of the year two hundred and forty-nine, among the legions of Mæſia; and that a ſubaltern officer[1] named Marinus, was the object of their ſeditious choice. Philip was alarmed. He dreaded leſt the treaſon of the Mæſian army ſhould prove the firſt ſpark of a general conflagration. Diſtracted with the conſciouſneſs of his guilt and of his danger, he communicated the intelligence to the ſenate. A gloomy ſilence prevailed, the effect of fear, and perhaps of diſaffection: till at length Decius, one of the aſſembly, aſſuming a ſpirit worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to diſcover more intrepidity than the emperor ſeemed to poſſeſs. He treated the whole buſineſs with contempt, as a haſty and inconſiderate tumult, and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who in a very few days would be deſtroyed by the ſame inconſtancy that had created him. The ſpeedy completion of the prophecy inſpired Philip with a juſt eſteem for ſo able a counſellor; and Decius appeared to him the only perſon capable of reſtoring peace and diſcipline to an army, whoſe tumultuous ſpirit did not immedi-

Services, revolt, victory, and reign of the emperor Decius. A. D. 249.

[1] The expreſſion uſed by Zoſimus and Zonaras may ſignify that Marinus commanded a century, a cohort, or a legion.

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ately ſubſide after the murder of Marinus. Decius, who long reſiſted his own nomination, ſeems to have inſinuated the danger of preſenting a leader of merit, to the angry and apprehenſive minds of the ſoldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The legions of Mæſia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His ſubſequent conduct, after that deciſive meaſure, was unavoidable. He conducted or followed his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raiſed up, advanced to meet him. The Imperial troops were ſuperior in number[a]; but the rebels formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle, or put to death a few days afterwards at Verona. His ſon and aſſociate in the empire was maſſacred at Rome by the Prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumſtances than the ambition of that age can uſually plead, was univerſally acknowledged by the ſenate and provinces. It is reported, that, immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title of Au-

[a] His birth at Bubalia, a little village in Pannonia (Eutrop. ix. Victor in Cæſarib. epitom.), ſeems to contradict, unleſs it was merely accidental, his ſuppoſed deſcent from the Decii. Six hundred years had beſtowed nobility on the Decii; but at the commencement of that period, they were only Plebeians of merit, and among the firſt who ſhared the conſulſhip with the haughty Patricians. Plebeiæ Deciorum animæ, &c. Juvenal, Sat. viii. 254. See the ſpirited ſpeech of Decius, in Livy, x. 9, 10.

2 guſtus,

guſtus, he had aſſured Philip by a private meſſage, of his innocence and loyalty, ſolemnly proteſting, that on his arrival in Italy, he would reſign the Imperial ornaments, and return to the condition of an obedient ſubject. His profeſſions might be ſincere. But in the ſituation where fortune had placed him, it was ſcarcely poſſible that he could either forgive or be forgiven [3].

He marches againſt the Goths. A.D. 250.

The emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace and the adminiſtration of juſtice, when he was ſummoned to the banks of the Danube by the invaſion of the GOTHS. This is the firſt conſiderable occaſion in which hiſtory mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, ſacked the Capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the ſubverſion of the Weſtern empire, that the name of GOTHS is frequently but improperly uſed as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbariſm.

Origin of the Goths from Scandinavia.

In the beginning of the ſixth century, and after the conqueſt of Italy, the Goths, in poſſeſſion of preſent greatneſs, very naturally indulged themſelves in the proſpect of paſt and of future glory. They wiſhed to preſerve the memory of their anceſtors, and to tranſmit to poſterity their own atchievements. The principal miniſter of the court of Ravenna, the learned Caſſiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic hiſtory, which conſiſted of twelve books, now reduced to

[3] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 20. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 624. Edit. Louvre.

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the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes[4]. These writers passed with the most artful conciseness over the misfortunes of the nation, celebrated its successful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Asiatic trophies, that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient songs, the uncertain, but the only memorials of barbarians, they deduced the first origin of the Goths, from the vast island, or peninsula, of Scandinavia[5]. That extreme country of the north was not unknown to the conquerors of Italy: the ties of ancient consanguinity had been strengthened by recent offices of friendship; and a Scandinavian king had cheerfully abdicated his savage greatness, that he might pass the remainder of his days in the peaceful and polished court of Ravenna[6]. Many vestiges, which cannot be ascribed to the arts of popular vanity, attest the ancient residence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic. From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into east and west Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century) whilst Christianity was advancing with a slow progress into the north, the Goths and the Swedes com-

4 See the prefaces of Cassiodorus and Jornandes: it is surprising that the latter should be omitted in the excellent edition published by Grotius, of the Gothic writers.

5 On the authority of Ablavius, Jornandes quotes some old Gothic chronicles in verse. De Reb. Geticis, c. 4.

6 Jornandes, c. 3.

posed

poſed two diſtinct and ſometimes hoſtile members of the ſame monarchy[7]. The latter of theſe two names has prevailed without extinguiſhing the former. The Swedes, who might well be ſatisfied with their own fame in arms, have in every age claimed the kindred glory of the Goths. In a moment of diſcontent againſt the court of Rome, Charles the Twelfth inſinuated, that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave anceſtors, who had already ſubdued the miſtreſs of the world[8].

Religion of the Goths.

Till the end of the eleventh century, a celebrated temple ſubſiſted at Upſal, the moſt conſiderable town of the Swedes and Goths. It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and ſanctified by the uncouth repreſentations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the goddeſs of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general feſtival, that was ſolemnized every ninth year, nine animals of every ſpecies (without excepting the human) were ſacrificed, and their bleeding bodies ſuſpended in the ſacred grove adjacent to the temple[9]. The only traces that

7 See in the Prolegomena of Grotius ſome large extracts from Adam of Bremen, and Saxo-Grammaticus. The former wrote in the year 1077, the latter flouriſhed about the year 1200.

8 Voltaire, Hiſtoire de Charles XII. l. iii. When the Auſtrians deſired the aid of the court of Rome againſt Guſtavus Adolphus, they always repreſented that conqueror as the lineal ſucceſſor of Alaric. Harte's Hiſtory of Guſtavus, vol. ii. p. 123.

9 See Adam of Bremen in Grotii Prolegomenis, p. 104. The temple of Upſal was deſtroyed by Ingo king of Sweden, who began his

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that now ſubſiſt of this barbaric ſuperſtition are contained in the Edda, a ſyſtem of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and ſtudied by the learned of Denmark and Sweden, as the moſt valuable remains of their ancient traditions.

Inſtitutions and death of Odin.

Notwithſtanding the myſterious obſcurity of the Edda, we can eaſily diſtinguiſh two perſons confounded under the name of Odin; the god of war, and the great legiſlator of Scandinavia. The latter, the Mahomet of the north, inſtituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes on either ſide of the Baltic were ſubdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his perſuaſive eloquence, and by the fame, which he acquired, of a moſt ſkilful magician. The faith that he had propagated during a long and proſperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehenſive of the ignominious approach of diſeaſe and infirmity, he reſolved to expire as became a warrior. In a ſolemn aſſembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himſelf in nine mortal places, haſtening away (as he aſſerted with his dying voice) to prepare the feaſt of heroes in the palace of the god of war [10].

Agreeable but uncertain hypotheſis concerning Odin,

The native and proper habitation of Odin is diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of As-gard. The happy reſemblance of that name with As-burg,

reign in the year 1075, and about fourſcore years afterwards a Chriſtian cathedral was erected on its ruins. See Dalin's Hiſtory of Sweden, in the Bibliotheque Raiſonnée.

[10] Mallet, Introduction à l'Hiſtoire du Dannemarc,

or

or As-of [11], words of a similar signification, has given rise to an historical system of so pleasing a contexture, that we could almost wish to persuade ourselves of its truth. It is supposed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Mæotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the north with servitude. That Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to resist, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of the Asiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great design of forming, in that inaccessible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people, which, in some remote age, might be subservient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticism, should issue in numerous swarms from the neighbourhood of the Polar circle, to chastise the oppressors of mankind [12].

Emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia into Prussia.

If so many successive generations of Goths were capable of preserving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we must not expect, from

[11] Mallet, c. iv. p. 55, has collected from Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and Stephanus Byzantinus, the vestiges of such a city and people.

[12] This wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might supply the noble groundwork of an Epic poem, cannot safely be received as authentic history. According to the obvious sense of the Edda, and the interpretation of the most skilful critics, As-gard, instead of denoting a real city of the Asiatic Sarmatia, is the fictitious appellation of the mystic abode of the gods, the Olympus of Scandinavia: from whence the prophet was supposed to descend, when he announced his new religion to the Gothic nations, who were already seated in the southern parts of Sweden.

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ſuch unlettered barbarians, any diſtinct account of the time and circumſtances of their emigration. To croſs the Baltic was an eaſy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were maſters of a ſufficient number of large veſſels, with oars [13], and the diſtance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlſcroon to the neareſt ports of Pomerania and Pruſſia. Here, at length, we land on firm and hiſtoric ground. At leaſt as early as the Chriſtian æra [14], and as late as the age of the Antonines [15], the Goths were eſtabliſhed towards the mouth of the Viſtula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Koningſberg, and Dantzick were long afterwards founded [16]. Weſtward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were ſpread along the banks of the Oder, and the ſea-coaſt of Pomerania and Mecklenburgh. A ſtriking reſemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language, ſeemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people [17]. The latter appear to have been ſub-

[13] Tacit. Germania, c. 44.

[14] Tacit. Annal. ii. 62. If we could yield a firm aſſent to the navigations of Pytheas of Marſeilles, we muſt allow that the Goths had paſſed the Baltic at leaſt three hundred years before Chriſt.

[15] Ptolemy, l. ii.

[16] By the German colonies who followed the arms of th Teutonic knights. The conqueſt and converſion of Pruſſia were completed by thoſe adventurers in the xiiith century.

[17] Pliny (Hiſt. Natur. iv. 14.), and Procopius in Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 1.) agree in this opinion. They lived in diſtant ages, and poſſeſſed different means of inveſtigating the truth.

divided

divided into Oſtrogoths, Viſigoths, and Gepidæ [18]. The diſtinction among the Vandals was more ſtrongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty ſtates, many of which, in a future age, expanded themſelves into powerful monarchies.

From Pruſſia to the Ukraine.

In the age of the Antonines, the Goths were ſtill ſeated in Pruſſia. About the reign of Alexander Severus, the Roman province of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and deſtructive inroads [19]. In this interval, therefore, of about ſeventy years, we muſt place the ſecond migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cauſe that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unſettled barbarians. Either a peſtilence, or a famine, a victory, or a defeat, an oracle of the gods, or the eloquence of a daring leader, were ſufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the ſouth. Beſides the influence of a martial religion, the numbers and ſpirit of the Goths were equal to

[18] The *Oſtro* and *Viſi*, the eaſtern and weſtern Goths, obtained thoſe denominations from their original ſeats in Scandinavia. In all their future marches and ſettlements they preſerved, with their names, the ſame relative ſituation. When they firſt departed from Sweden, the infant colony was contained in three veſſels. The third being a heavy ſailer lagged behind, and the crew, which afterwards ſwelled into a nation, received from that circumſtance the appellation of Gepidæ or Loiterers. Jornandes, c. 17.

[19] See a fragment of Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legationum; and with regard to its probable date, ſee Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 346.

the

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the moſt dangerous adventures. The uſe of round bucklers and ſhort ſwords rendered them formidable in a cloſe engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings, gave uncommon union and ſtability to their councils [20]; and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth anceſtor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the aſcendant of perſonal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *Anſes*, or demi-gods of the Gothic nation [21].

The Gothic nation increaſes in its march.

The fame of a great enterpriſe excited the braveſt warriors from all the Vandalic ſtates of Germany, many of whom are ſeen a few years afterwards combating under the common ſtandard of the Goths [22]. The firſt motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prypec, a river univerſally conceived by the ancients to be the ſouthern branch of the Boryſthenes [23]. The windings of that great ſtream through the plains of Poland and Ruſſia gave a direction to their line of march, and a conſtant ſupply of freſh water, and paſturage to their numerous herds of

20 Omnium harum gentium inſigne, rotunda ſcuta, breves gladii, et erga reges obſequium. Tacit. Germania, c. 43. The Goths probably acquired their iron by the commerce of amber.

21 Jornandes, c. 13, 14.

22 The Heruli, and the Uregundi or Burgundi, are particularly mentioned. See Maſcou's Hiſtory of the Germans, l. v. A paſſage in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 28, ſeems to allude to this great emigration. The Marcomannic war was partly occaſioned by the preſſure of barbarous tribes, who fled before the arms of more northern barbarians.

23 D'Anville, Geographie Ancienne, and the third part of his incomparable map of Europe.

cattle.

cattle. They followed the unknown courſe of the river, confident in their valour, and careleſs of whatever power might oppoſe their progreſs. The Baſtarnæ and the Venedi were the firſt who preſented themſelves; and the flower of their youth, either from choice or compulſion, increaſed the Gothic army. The Baſtarnæ dwelt on the northern ſide of the Carpathian mountains; the immenſe tract of land that ſeparated the Baſtarnæ from the ſavages of Finland was poſſeſſed, or rather waſted, by the Venedi[24]: we have ſome reaſon to believe that the firſt of theſe nations, which diſtinguiſhed itſelf in the Macedonian war[25], and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, &c. derived its origin from the Germans. With better authority, a Sarmatian extraction may be aſſigned to the Venedi, who rendered themſelves ſo famous in the middle ages[26]. But the confuſion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the moſt accurate obſervers[27]. As the Goths advanced near the Euxine ſea, they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the Jazyges, the Alani, and the Roxolani; and they were probably the firſt Germans who ſaw the mouths of the Boryſthenes, and of the Tanais. If we enquire into the cha-

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Diſtinction of Germans and Sarmatians.

[24] Tacit. Germania, c. 46.

[25] Cluver. Germ. Antiqua, l. iii. c. 43.

[26] The Venedi, the *Slavi*, and the Antes, were the three great tribes of the ſame people. Jornandes, c. 24.

[27] Tacitus moſt aſſuredly deſerves that title, and even his cautious ſuſpenſe is a proof of his diligent inquiries.

racteriſtic

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racteriſtic marks of the people of Germany and of Sarmatia, we ſhall diſcover that thoſe two great portions of human kind were principally diſtinguiſhed by fixed huts or moveable tents, by a cloſe dreſs, or flowing garments, by the marriage of one or of ſeveral wives, by a military force, conſiſting, for the moſt part, either of infantry or cavalry; and above all by the uſe of the Teutonic, or of the Sclavonian language; the laſt of which has been diffuſed by conqueſt, from the confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

Deſcription of the Ukraine.

The Goths were now in poſſeſſion of the Ukraine, a country of conſiderable extent and uncommon fertility, interſected with navigable rivers, which from either ſide diſcharge themſelves into the Boryſthenes; and interſperſed with large and lofty foreſts of oaks. The plenty of game and fiſh, the innumerable bee-hives, depoſited in the hollow of old trees, and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the ſize of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptneſs of the ſoil for every ſpecies of grain, and the luxuriancy of the vegetation, all diſplayed the liberality of Nature, and tempted the induſtry of man[28]. But the Goths withſtood all theſe temptations, and ſtill adhered to a life of idleneſs, of poverty, and of rapine.

[28] Genealogical Hiſtory of the Tartars, p. 593. Mr. Bell (Vol. ii. p. 379.) traverſed the Ukraine in his journey from Peterſburgh to Conſtantinople. The modern face of the country is a juſt repreſentation of the ancient, ſince, in the hands of the Coſſacks, it ſtill remains in a ſtate of nature.

The

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The Goths invade the Roman provinces.

The Scythian hords, which, towards the eaſt, bordered on the new ſettlements of the Goths, preſented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the proſpect of the Roman territories was far more alluring; and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harveſts, ſown by the hands of an induſtrious, and expoſed to be gathered by thoſe of a warlike people. It is probable, that the conqueſts of Trajan, maintained by his ſucceſſors, leſs for any real advantage, than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that ſide. The new and unſettled province of Dacia was neither ſtrong enough to reſiſt, nor rich enough to ſatiate, the rapaciouſneſs of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Nieſter were conſidered as the boundary of the Roman power, the fortifications of the Lower Danube were more careleſsly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mæſia lived in ſupine ſecurity, fondly conceiving themſelves at an inacceſſible diſtance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their miſtake. The king, or leader, of that fierce nation, traverſed with contempt the province of Dacia, and paſſed both the Nieſter and the Danube without encountering any oppoſition capable of retarding his progreſs. The relaxed diſcipline of the Roman troops betrayed the moſt important poſts, where they were ſtationed, and the fear of deſerved puniſhment induced great numbers of them to inliſt under

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under the Gothic ſtandard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his ſiſter, and at that time the capital of the ſecond Mæſia [29]. The inhabitants conſented to ranſom their lives and property, by the payment of a large ſum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deſerts, animated, rather than ſatisfied, with the firſt ſucceſs of their arms againſt an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was ſoon tranſmitted to the emperor Decius, that Cniva, king of the Goths, had paſſed the Danube a ſecond time, with more conſiderable forces; that his numerous detachments ſcattered devaſtation over the province of Mæſia, whilſt the main body of the army, conſiſting of ſeventy thouſand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the moſt daring atchievements, required the preſence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

Various events of the Gothic war. A.D. 250.

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories [30]. On his approach they raiſed the ſiege, but with a deſign only of marching away to a conqueſt of greater import-

[29] In the ſixteenth chapter of Jornandes, inſtead of *ſecundo* Mæſiam, we may venture to ſubſtitute *ſecundam*, the ſecond Mæſia, of which Marcianopolis was certainly the capital (ſee Hierocles de Provinciis, and Weſſeling ad locum, p. 636. Itinerar.). It is ſurpriſing how this palpable error of the ſcribe could eſcape the judicious correction of Grotius.

[30] The place is ſtill called Nicop. The little ſtream, on whoſe banks it ſtood, falls into the Danube. D'Anville, Geographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 307.

ance,

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ance, the ſiege of Philopopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of mount Hæmus [31]. Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but when he imagined himſelf at a conſiderable diſtance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his purſuers. The camp of the Romans was ſurpriſed and pillaged, and, for the firſt time, their emperor fled in diſorder before a troop of half-armed barbarians. After a long reſiſtance, Philippopolis, deſtitute of ſuccour, was taken by ſtorm. A hundred thouſand perſons are reported to have been maſſacred in the ſack of that great city [32]. Many priſoners of conſequence became a valuable acceſſion to the ſpoil; and Priſcus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, bluſhed not to aſſume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome [33]. The time, however, conſumed in that tedious ſiege, enabled Decius to revive the courage, reſtore the diſcipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted ſeveral parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were haſtening to ſhare the victory of their countrymen [34], intruſted the paſſes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity [35], repaired and

31 Stephan. Byzant. de Urbibus, p. 740. Weſſeling Itinerar. p. 136. Zonaras, by an odd miſtake, aſcribes the foundation of Philippopolis to the immediate predeceſſor of Decius.

32 Ammian. xxxi. 5. 33 Aurel. Victor. c. 29.

34 *Victoriæ Carpicæ*, on ſome medals of Decius, inſinuate theſe advantages.

35 Claudius (who afterwards reigned with ſo much glory) was poſted in the paſs of Thermopylæ with 200 Dardanians, 100 heavy and

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and ſtrengthened the fortifications of the Danube, and exerted his utmoſt vigilance to oppoſe either the progreſs or the retreat of the Goths. Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiouſly waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and deciſive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms [36].

Decius revives the office of cenſor in the perſon of Valerian.

At the ſame time when Decius was ſtruggling with the violence of the tempeſt, his mind, calm and deliberate amidſt the tumult of war, inveſtigated the more general cauſes, that, ſince the age of the Antonines, had ſo impetuouſly urged the decline of the Roman greatneſs. He ſoon diſcovered that it was impoſſible to replace that greatneſs on a permanent baſis, without reſtoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppreſſed majeſty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous deſign, he firſt reſolved to revive the obſolete office of cenſor; an office, which, as long as it had ſubſiſted in its priſtine integrity, had ſo much contributed to the perpetuity of the ſtate [37], till it was uſurped and gradually neglected

and 160 light horſe, 60 Cretan archers, and 1000 well armed recruits. See an original letter from the emperor to his officer, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 200.

[36] Jornandes, c. 16—18. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 22. In the general account of this war, it is eaſy to diſcover the oppoſite prejudices of the Gothic and the Grecian writer. In careleſſneſs alone they are alike.

[37] Monteſquieu, Grandeur et Decadence des Romains, c. viii. He illuſtrates the nature and uſe of the cenſorſhip, with his uſual ingenuity, and with uncommon preciſion.

by the Cæſars[38]. Conſcious that the favour of the ſovereign may confer power, but that the eſteem of the people can alone beſtow authority, he ſubmitted the choice of the cenſor to the unbiaſſed voice of the ſenate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then ſerved with diſtinction in the army of Decius, was declared the moſt worthy of that exalted honour. As ſoon as the decree of the ſenate was tranſmitted to the emperor, he aſſembled a great council in his camp, and, before the inveſtiture of the cenſor elect, he apprized him of the difficulty and importance of his great office. "Happy Valerian," ſaid the prince to his diſtinguiſhed ſubject, "happy in the general appro-"bation of the ſenate and of the Roman repub-"lic! Accept the cenſorſhip of mankind; and "judge of our manners. You will ſelect thoſe "who deſerve to continue members of the ſe-"nate; you will reſtore the equeſtrian order to "its ancient ſplendour; you will improve the "revenue, yet moderate the public burdens. "You will diſtinguiſh into regular claſſes the "various and infinite multitude of citizens, and "accurately review the military ſtrength, the "wealth, the virtue, and the reſources of Rome. "Your deciſions ſhall obtain the force of laws. "The army, the palace, the miniſters of juſtice,

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A.D. 251. 27th October.

[38] Veſpaſian and Titus were the laſt cenſors (Pliny Hiſt. Natur. vii. 49. Cenſorinus de Die Natali). The modeſty of Trajan refuſed an honour which he deſerved, and his example became a law to the Antonines. See Pliny's Panegyric, c. 45 and 60.

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"and the great officers of the empire are all "subject to your tribunal. None are exempted, "excepting only the ordinary consuls[39], the "præfect of the city, the king of the sacrifices, "and (as long as she preserves her chastity in- "violate) the eldest of the vestal virgins. Even "these few, who may not dread the severity, "will anxiously solicit the esteem, of the Roman "censor[40]."

The design impracticable and without effect.

A magistrate, invested with such extensive powers, would have appeared not so much the minister as the colleague of his sovereign[41]. Valerian justly dreaded an elevation so full of envy and of suspicion. He modestly urged the alarming greatness of the trust, his own insufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully insinuated, that the office of censor was inseparable from the Imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a subject were unequal to the support of such an immense weight of cares and of power[42]. The approaching event of war soon put an end to the prosecution of a project so specious but so impracticable; and whilst it preserved Valerian from the danger, saved the emperor Decius from the disappointment which would most probably have attended

39 Yet, in spite of this exemption, Pompey appeared before that tribunal during his consulship. The occasion indeed was equally singular and honourable. Plutarch in Pomp. p. 630.

40 See the original speech, in the Augustan Hist. p. 173, 174.

41 This transaction might deceive Zonaras, who supposes that Valerian was actually declared the colleague of Decius, l. xii. p. 625.

42 Hist. August. p. 174. The emperor's reply is omitted.

it.

it. A cenſor may maintain, he can never reſtore, the morals of a ſtate. It is impoſſible for ſuch a magiſtrate to exert his authority with benefit, or even with effect, unleſs he is ſupported by a quick ſenſe of honour and virtue in the minds of the people; by a decent reverence for the public opinion, and by a train of uſeful prejudices combating on the ſide of national manners. In a period when theſe principles are annihilated, the cenſorial juriſdiction muſt either ſink into empty pageantry, or be converted into a partial inſtrument of vexatious oppreſſion[43]. It was eaſier to vanquiſh the Goths, than to eradicate the public vices; yet, even in the firſt of theſe enterpriſes, Decius loſt his army and his life.

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Defeat and death of Decius and his ſon.

The Goths were now on every ſide ſurrounded and purſued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had periſhed in the long ſiege of Philippopolis, and the exhauſted country could no longer afford ſubſiſtence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchaſed, by the ſurrender of all their booty and priſoners, the permiſſion of an undiſturbed retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and reſolving, by the chaſtiſement of theſe invaders, to ſtrike a ſalutary terror into the nations of the North, refuſed to liſten to any terms of accommodation. The high-ſpirited barbarians preferred death to ſlavery. An obſcure

43 Such as the attempts of Auguſtus towards a reformation of manners. Tacit. Annal. iii. 24.

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town of Mæſia, called Forum Terebronii[44], was the ſcene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a moraſs. In the beginning of the action, the ſon of Decius, a youth of the faireſt hopes, and already aſſociated to the honours of the purple, was ſlain by an arrow, in the ſight of his afflicted father; who, ſummoning all his fortitude, admoniſhed the diſmayed troops, that the loſs of a ſingle ſoldier was of little importance to the republic[45]. The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of deſpair againſt grief and rage. The firſt line of the Goths at length gave way in diſorder; the ſecond, advancing to ſuſtain it, ſhared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to diſpute the paſſage of the moraſs, which was imprudently attempted by the preſumption of the enemy. "Here the "fortune of the day turned, and all things be- "came adverſe to the Romans: the place deep "with ooze, ſinking under thoſe who ſtood, ſlip- "pery to ſuch as advanced; their armour heavy, "the waters deep; nor could they wield, in that "uneaſy ſituation, their weighty javelins. The "barbarians, on the contrary, were enured to "encounters in the bogs, their perſons tall, "their ſpears long, ſuch as could wound at a

44 Tillemont, Hiſtoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 598. As Zoſimus and ſome of his followers miſtake the Danube for the Tanais, they place the field of battle in the plains of Scythia.

45 Aurelius Victor allows two diſtinct actions for the deaths of the two Decii; but I have preferred the account of Jornandes.

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"distance[46]." In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost; nor could the body of the emperor ever be found[47]. Such was the fate of Decius, in the fiftieth year of his age; an accomplished prince, active in war, and affable in peace[48]; who, together with his son, has deserved to be compared, both in life and death, with the brightest examples of ancient virtue[49].

Election of Gallus. A. D. 251. December.

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, the insolence of the legions. They appear to have patiently expected, and submissively obeyed, the decree of the senate which regulated the succession to the throne. From a just regard for the memory of Decius, the Imperial title was conferred on Hostilianus, his only surviving son; but an equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus, whose experience and ability seemed equal to the great trust of guardian to the young prince and the distressed empire[50]. The first care of the new emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces

46 I have ventured to copy from Tacitus (Annal. i. 64.) the picture of a similar engagement between a Roman army and a German tribe.

47 Jornandes, c. 18. Zosimus, l. i. p. 22. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 627. Aurelius Victor.

48 The Decii were killed before the end of the year two hundred and fifty-one, since the new princes took possession of the consulship on the ensuing calends of January.

49 Hist. August. p. 223. gives them a very honourable place among the small number of good emperors who reigned between Augustus and Diocletian.

50 Hæc ubi Patres comperere decernunt. Victor in Cæsaribus.

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A.D. 252.

from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He conſented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invaſion, an immenſe booty, and, what was ſtill more diſgraceful, a great number of priſoners of the higheſt merit and quality. He plentifully ſupplied their camp with every conveniency that could aſſuage their angry ſpirits, or facilitate their ſo much wiſhed-for departure; and he even promiſed to pay them annually a large ſum of gold, on condition they ſhould never afterwards infeſt the Roman territories by their incurſions [51].

Retreat of the Goths.

Gallus purchaſes peace by the payment of an annual tribute.

In the age of the Scipios, the moſt opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with ſuch trifling preſents as could only derive a value from the hand that beſtowed them; an ivory chair, a coarſe garment of purple, an inconſiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin [52]. After the wealth of nations had centred in Rome, the emperors diſplayed their greatneſs, and even their policy, by the regular exerciſe of a ſteady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the ſtate. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompenſed their fidelity. Theſe voluntary marks of bounty were underſtood to flow, not from the fears, but merely from the generoſity

[51] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628.

[52] A *Sella*, a *Toga*, and a golden *Patera* of five pounds weight, were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy king of Egypt (Livy, xxvii. 4.). *Quina Millia Æris*, a weight of copper, in value about eighteen pounds ſterling, was the uſual preſent made to foreign ambaſſadors (Livy, xxxi. 9.).

or

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or the gratitude of the Romans; and whilſt preſents and ſubſidies were liberally diſtributed among friends and ſuppliants, they were ſternly refuſed to ſuch as claimed them as a debt [53]. But this ſtipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy, appeared without diſguiſe in the light of an ignominious tribute; the minds of the Romans were not yet accuſtomed to accept ſuch unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the prince, who by a neceſſary conceſſion had probably ſaved his country, became the object of the general contempt and averſion. The death of Hoſtilianus, though it happened in the midſt of a raging peſtilence, was interpreted as the perſonal crime of Gallus [54]; and even the defeat of the late emperor was aſcribed by the voice of ſuſpicion to the perfidious counſels of his hated ſucceſſor [55]. The tranquillity which the empire enjoyed during the firſt year of his adminiſtration [56], ſerved rather to inflame than to appeaſe the public diſcontent; and, as ſoon as the apprehenſions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more ſenſibly felt.

Popular diſcontent.

53 See the firmneſs of a Roman general ſo late as the time of Alexander Severus, in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 25. Edit. Louvre.

54 For the plague, ſee Jornandes, c. 19. and Victor in Cæſaribus.

55 Theſe improbable accuſations are alleged by Zoſimus, l. i. p. 23, 24.

56 Jornandes, c. 19. The Gothic writer at leaſt obſerved the peace which his victorious countrymen had ſworn to Gallus.

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Victory and revolt of Æmilianus. A.D. 253.

But the Romans were irritated to a ſtill higher degree, when they diſcovered that they had not even ſecured their repoſe, though at the expence of their honour. The dangerous ſecret of the wealth and weakneſs of the empire had been revealed to the world. New ſwarms of barbarians, encouraged by the ſucceſs, and not conceiving themſelves bound by the obligation, of their brethren, ſpread devaſtation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which ſeemed abandoned by the puſillanimous emperor, was aſſumed by Æmilianus, governor of Pannonia and Mæſia; who rallied the ſcattered forces, and revived the fainting ſpirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly attacked, routed, chaſed, and purſued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader diſtributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the ſoldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle [57]. Gallus, who, careleſs of the general welfare, indulged himſelf in the pleaſures of Italy, was almoſt in the ſame inſtant informed of the ſucceſs, of the revolt, and of the rapid approach of his aſpiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the armies came in ſight of each other, the ſoldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their ſovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of Æmilianus; they were attracted by his liberality,

57 Zoſimus, l. i. p. 25, 26.

for

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for he offered a conſiderable increaſe of pay to all deſerters[58]. The murder of Gallus, and of his ſon Voluſianus, put an end to the civil war; and the ſenate gave a legal ſanction to the rights of conqueſt. The letters of Æmilianus to that aſſembly, diſplayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He aſſured them, that he ſhould reſign to their wiſdom the civil adminiſtration; and, contenting himſelf with the quality of their general, would in a ſhort time aſſert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the North and of the Eaſt[59]. His pride was flattered by the applauſe of the ſenate; and medals are ſtill extant, repreſenting him with the name and attributes of Hercules the Victor, and of Mars the Avenger[60].

Gallus abandoned and ſlain. A.D. 253. May.

If the new monarch poſſeſſed the abilities, he wanted the time, neceſſary to fulfil theſe ſplendid promiſes. Leſs than four months intervened between his victory and his fall[61]. He had vanquiſhed Gallus: he ſunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had ſent Valerian, already diſtinguiſhed by the honourable title of cenſor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany[62] to his aid. Valerian executed that commiſſion with zeal and fidelity; and as he arrived too late to

Valerian revenges the death of Gallus, and is acknowledged emperor.

58 Victor in Cæſaribus. 59 Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628.

60 Banduri Numiſmata, p. 94.

61 Eutropius, l. ix. c. 6. ſays tertio menſe. Euſebius omits this emperor.

62 Zoſimus, l. i. p. 28. Eutropius and Victor ſtation Valerian's army in Rhætia.

ſave

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ſave his ſovereign, he reſolved to revenge him. The troops of Æmilianus, who ſtill lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the ſanctity of his character, but much more by the ſuperior ſtrength of his army; and as they were now become as incapable of perſonal attachment as they had always been of conſtitutional principle, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who ſo lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained the poſſeſſion of the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence ſingular in that age of revolutions: ſince he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predeceſſor, whom he dethroned.

A.D. 253. Auguſt.

Character of Valerian.

Valerian was about ſixty years of age[63] when he was inveſted with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace, or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual aſcent through the honours of the ſtate, he had deſerved the favour of virtuous princes, and had declared himſelf the enemy of tyrants[64]. His noble birth, his mild but unblemiſhed manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the ſenate and people; and if mankind (according to the obſervation of an ancient writer) had been

[63] He was about ſeventy at the time of his acceſſion, or, as it is more probable, of his death. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 173. Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 893. note 1.

[64] Inimicus Tyrannorum. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 173. In the glorious ſtruggle of the ſenate againſt Maximin, Valerian acted a very ſpirited part. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 156.

left

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left at liberty to chooſe a maſter, their choice would moſt aſſuredly have fallen on Valerian[65]. Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at leaſt his ſpirit, were affected by the languor and coldneſs of old age. The conſciouſneſs of his decline engaged him to ſhare the throne with a younger and more active aſſociate[66]: the emergency of the times demanded a general no leſs than a prince; and the experience of the Roman cenſor might have directed him where to beſtow the Imperial purple, as the reward of military merit. But inſtead of making a judicious choice, which would have confirmed his reign and endeared his memory, Valerian, conſulting only the dictates of affection or vanity, immediately inveſted with the ſupreme honours his ſon Gallienus, a youth whoſe effeminate vices had been hitherto concealed by the obſcurity of a private ſtation. The joint government of the father and the ſon ſubſiſted about ſeven, and the ſole adminiſtration of Gallienus continued about eight years. But the whole period was one uninterrupted ſeries of confuſion and calamity. As the Roman empire was at the ſame time, and on every ſide, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of do-

General misfortunes of the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus. A. D. 253—268.

65 According to the diſtinction of Victor, he ſeems to have received the title of *Imperator* from the army, and that of Auguſtus from the ſenate.

66 From Victor and from the medals, Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 710.) very juſtly infers, that Gallienus was aſſociated to the empire about the month of Auguſt of the year 253.

meſtic

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meſtic uſurpers, we ſhall conſult order and perſpicuity, by purſuing, not ſo much the doubtful arrangement of dates, as the more natural diſtribution of ſubjects. The moſt dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were, 1. The Franks. 2. The Alemanni. 3. The Goths; and, 4. The Perſians. Under theſe general appellations, we may comprehend the adventures of leſs conſiderable tribes, whoſe obſcure and uncouth names would only ſerve to oppreſs the memory and perplex the attention of the reader.

Inroads of the barbarians.

Origin and confederacy of the Franks.

I. As the poſterity of the Franks compoſe one of the greateſt and moſt enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity have been exhauſted in the diſcovery of their unlettered anceſtors. To the tales of credulity, have ſucceeded the ſyſtems of fancy. Every paſſage has been ſifted, every ſpot has been ſurveyed, that might poſſibly reveal ſome faint traces of their origin. It has been ſuppoſed, that Pannonia[67], that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany[68], gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the moſt rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigrations of ideal conquerors, have acquieſced in a ſentiment whoſe ſimplicity perſuades us of its truth.

[67] Various ſyſtems have been formed to explain a difficult paſſage in Gregory of Tours, l. ii. c. 9.

[68] The Geographer of Ravenna, i. 11. by mentioning *Mauringania* on the confines of Denmark, as the ancient ſeat of the Franks, gave birth to an ingenious ſyſtem of Leibnitz.

truth[69]. They suppose, that about the year two hundred and forty[70], a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks, by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weser. The present circle of Westphalia, the Landgraviate of Hesse, and the duchies of Brunswick and Lunenburg, were the ancient seat of the Chauci, who, in their inaccessible morasses, defied the Roman arms[71]; of the Cherusci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of several other tribes of inferior power and renown[72]. The love of liberty was the ruling passion of these Germans; the enjoyment of it their best treasure; the word that expressed that enjoyment, the most pleasing to their ear. They deserved, they assumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks or Freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguish, the peculiar names of the several states of the confederacy[73]. Tacit consent, and mutual advantage, dictated the first laws of the union; it was gradually cemented by habit and experience.

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69 See Cluver. Germania Antiqua, l. iii. c. 20. M. Freret, in the Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii.

70 Most probably under the reign of Gordian, from an accidental circumstance fully canvassed by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 710. 1181.

71 Plin. Hist. Natur. xvi. 1. The panegyrists frequently allude to the morasses of the Franks.

72 Tacit. Germania, c. 30. 37.

73 In a subsequent period, most of those old names are occasionally mentioned. See some vestiges of them in Cluver. Germ. Antiq. l. iii.

The

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The league of the Franks may admit of ſome compariſon with the Helvetic body; in which every canton, retaining its independent ſovereignty, conſults with its brethren in the common cauſe, without acknowledging the authority of any ſupreme head, or repreſentative aſſembly [74]. But the principle of the two confederacies was extremely different. A peace of two hundred years has rewarded the wiſe and honeſt policy of the Swiſs. An inconſtant ſpirit, the thirſt of rapine, and a diſregard to the moſt ſolemn treaties, diſgraced the character of the Franks.

They invade Gaul,

The Romans had long experienced the daring valour of the people of Lower Germany. The union of their ſtrength threatened Gaul with a more formidable invaſion, and required the preſence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of Imperial power [75]. Whilſt that prince, and his infant ſon Salonius, diſplayed, in the court of Treves, the majeſty of the empire, its armies were ably conducted by their general Poſthumus, who, though he afterwards betrayed the family of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great intereſt of the monarchy. The treacherous language of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a long ſeries of victories. Trophies and titles atteſt (if ſuch evidence can atteſt) the fame of Poſthumus, who is repeatedly ſtyled The conqueror of the Germans, and the ſaviour of Gaul [76].

74 Simler de Republica Helvet. cum notis Fuſelin.

75 Zoſimus, l. i. p. 27.

76 M. de Brequigny (in the Memoires de l'Academie, tom. xxx.) has given us a very curious life of Poſthumus. A ſeries of the Auguſtan Hiſtory from Medals and Inſcriptions has been more than once planned, and is ſtill much wanted.

But

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But a ſingle fact, the only one indeed of which we have any diſtinct knowledge, eraſes, in a great meaſure, theſe monuments of vanity and adulation. The Rhine, though dignified with the title of Safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier againſt the daring ſpirit of enterpriſe with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devaſtations ſtretched from the river to the foot of the Pyrenees: nor were they ſtopped by thoſe mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to reſiſt, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years, the greateſt part of the reign of Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and deſtructive hoſtilities. Tarragona, the flouriſhing capital of a peaceful province, was ſacked and almoſt deſtroyed[77]; and ſo late as the days of Oroſius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages, ſcattered amidſt the ruins of magnificent cities, ſtill recorded the rage of the barbarians[78]. When the exhauſted country no longer ſupplied a variety of plunder, the Franks ſeized on ſome veſſels in the ports of Spain[79], and tranſported themſelves into Mauritania. The diſtant province was aſtoniſhed with the fury of theſe barbarians, who ſeemed to

ravage Spain.

and paſs over into Africa.

77 Aurel. Victor, c. 33. Inſtead of *Pæne direpto*, both the ſenſe and the expreſſion require *deleto*; though indeed, for different reaſons, it is alike difficult to correct the text of the beſt, and of the worſt, writers.

78 In the time of Auſonius (the end of the fourth century) Ilerda or Lerida was in a very ruinous ſtate (Auſon. Epiſt. xxv. 58.), which probably was the conſequence of this invaſion.

79 Valeſius is therefore miſtaken in ſuppoſing that the Franks had invaded Spain by ſea.

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fall from a new world, as their name, manners, and complexion, were equally unknown on the coaſt of Africa [80].

Origin and renown of the Suevi.

II. In that part of Upper Saxony beyond the Elbe, which is at preſent called the Marquiſate of Luſace, there exiſted, in ancient times, a ſacred wood, the awful ſeat of the ſuperſtition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts, without confeſſing, by their servile bonds and ſuppliant poſture, the immediate preſence of the ſovereign Deity [81]. Patriotism contributed as well as devotion to conſecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnones [82]. It was univerſally believed, that the nation had received its firſt exiſtence on that ſacred ſpot. At ſtated periods, the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood, reſorted thither by their ambaſſadors; and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rites and human ſacrifices. The wide extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to thoſe of the Danube. They were diſtinguiſhed from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dreſſing their long hair, which they gathered into a knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that ſhewed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the enemy [83]. Jealous as the Germans were of military renown, they

[80] Aurel. Victor. Eutrop. ix. 6.

[81] Tacit. Germania, 38. [82] Cluver. Germ. Antiq. iii. 25.

[83] Sic Suevi a ceteris Germanis, ſic Suevorum ingenui a ſervis ſeparantur. A proud ſeparation!

all

all confeſſed the ſuperior valour of the Suevi; and the tribes of the Uſipetes and Tencteri, who, with a vaſt army, encountered the dictator Cæſar, declared that they eſteemed it not a diſgrace to have fled before a people, to whoſe arms the immortal gods themſelves were unequal [84]. CHAP. X.

A mixed body of Suevi aſſume the name of Alemanni.

In the reign of the emperor Caracalla, an innumerable ſwarm of Suevi appeared on the banks of the Mein, and in the neighbourhood of the Roman provinces, in queſt either of food, of plunder, or of glory [85]. The haſty army of volunteers gradually coaleſced into a great and permanent nation, and as it was compoſed from ſo many different tribes, aſſumed the name of Alemanni, or *All-men*; to denote at once their various lineage, and their common bravery [86]. The latter was ſoon felt by the Romans in many a hoſtile inroad. The Alemanni fought chiefly on horſeback; but their cavalry was rendered ſtill more formidable by a mixture of light infantry, ſelected from the braveſt and moſt active of the youth, whom frequent exerciſe had enured to accompany the horſeman in the longeſt march, the moſt rapid charge, or the moſt precipitate retreat [87].

[84] Cæſar in Bello Gallico, iv. 7.

[85] Victor in Caracal. Dion Caſſius, lxvii. p. 1359.

[86] This etymology (far different from thoſe which amuſe the fancy of the learned) is preſerved by Aſinius Quadratus, an original hiſtorian, quoted by Agathias, i. c. 5.

[87] The Suevi engaged Cæſar in this manner, and the manœuvre deſerved the approbation of the conqueror (in Bello Gallico, iv. 48.).

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invade Gaul and Italy,

This warlike people of Germans had been aſtoniſhed by the immenſe preparations of Alexander Severus, they were diſmayed by the arms of his ſucceſſor, a barbarian equal in valour and fierceneſs to themſelves. But ſtill hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increaſed the general diſorder that enſued after the death of Decius. They inflicted ſevere wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul; they were the firſt who removed the veil that covered the feeble majeſty of Italy. A numerous body of the Alemanni penetrated acroſs the Danube, and through the Rhætian Alps, into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and diſplayed the victorious banners of barbarians almoſt in ſight of Rome [88]. The inſult and the danger rekindled in the ſenate ſome ſparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far diſtant wars, Valerian in the Eaſt, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and reſources of the Romans were in themſelves. In this emergency, the ſenators reſumed the defence of the republic, drew out the Prætorian guards, who had been left to garriſon the capital, and filled up their numbers, by inliſting into the public ſervice the ſtouteſt and moſt willing of the Plebeians. The Alemanni, aſtoniſhed with the ſudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany, laden with ſpoil; and their retreat was eſteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans [89].

are repulſed from Rome by the ſenate and people.

[88] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 215, 216. Dexippus in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 8. Hieronym. Chron. Oroſius, vii. 22.

[89] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 34.

When

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When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much leſs delighted, than alarmed, with the courage of the ſenate, ſince it might one day prompt them to reſcue the public from domeſtic tyranny, as well as from foreign invaſion. His timid ingratitude was publiſhed to his ſubjects, in an edict which prohibited the ſenators from exerciſing any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundleſs. The rich and luxurious nobles, ſinking into their natural character, accepted, as a favour, this diſgraceful exemption from military ſervice; and as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas, they cheerfully reſigned the more dangerous cares of empire, to the rough hands of peaſants and ſoldiers [90].

The ſenators excluded by Gallienus from the military ſervice.

Another invaſion of the Alemanni, of a more formidable aſpect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the lower empire. Three hundred thouſand of that warlike people are ſaid to have been vanquiſhed, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in perſon, at the head of only ten thouſand Romans [91]. We may however, with great probability, aſcribe this incredible victory, either to the credulity of the hiſtorian, or to ſome exaggerated exploits of one of the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very

Gallienus contracts an alliance with the Alemanni.

[90] Aurel. Victor, in Gallieno et Probo. His complaints breathe an uncommon ſpirit of freedom.

[91] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 631.

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different nature, that Gallienus endeavoured to protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He eſpouſed Pipa the daughter of a king of the Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often confounded with the Alemanni in their wars and conqueſts[92]. To the father, as the price of his alliance, he granted an ample ſettlement in Pannonia. The native charms of unpoliſhed beauty ſeem to have fixed the daughter in the affections of the inconſtant emperor, and the bands of policy were more firmly connected by thoſe of love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome ſtill refuſed the name of marriage, to the profane mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has ſtigmatized the German princeſs with the opprobrious title of concubine of Gallienus[93].

Inroads of the Goths.

III. We have already traced the emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia, or at leaſt from Pruſſia, to the mouth of the Boryſthenes, and have followed their victorious arms from the Boryſthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the frontier of the laſt-mentioned river was perpetually infeſted by the inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was defended by the Romans with more than uſual firmneſs and ſucceſs. The provinces that were the ſeat of war, recruited the armies of Rome with an inexhauſtible ſupply of hardy ſoldiers; and more than one of theſe Illyrian peaſants at-

[92] One of the victors calls him King of the Marcomanni; the other, of the Germans.

[93] See Tillemont, Hiſt. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 398, &c.

tained

tained the ſtation, and diſplayed the abilities, of a general. Though flying parties of the barbarians, who inceſſantly hovered on the banks of the Danube, penetrated ſometimes to the confines of Italy and Macedonia; their progreſs was commonly checked, or their return intercepted, by the Imperial lieutenants [94]. But the great ſtream of the Gothic hoſtilities was diverted into a very different channel. The Goths, in their new ſettlement of the Ukraine, ſoon became maſters of the northern coaſt of the Euxine: to the ſouth of that inland ſea, were ſituated the ſoft and wealthy provinces of Aſia Minor, which poſſeſſed all that could attract, and nothing that could reſiſt, a barbarian conqueror. CHAP. X.

Conqueſt of the Boſphorus by the Goths;

The banks of the Boryſthenes are only ſixty miles diſtant from the narrow entrance [95] of the peninſula of Crim Tartary, known to the ancients under the name of Cherſoneſus Taurica [96]. On that hoſpitable ſhore, Euripides, embelliſhing with exquiſite art the tales of antiquity, has placed the ſcene of one of his moſt affecting tragedies [97]. The bloody ſacrifices of Diana, the arrival of Oreſtes and Pylades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over ſavage fierceneſs, ſerve to repreſent an hiſtorical truth, that the Tauri,

94 See the lives of Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

95 It is about half a league in breadth. Genealogical Hiſtory of the Tartars, p. 598.

96 M. de Peyſſonel, who had been French conſul at Caffa, in his Obſervations ſur les Peuples Barbares, qui ont habité les bords du Danube.

97 Euripides in Iphigenia in Taurid.

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the original inhabitants of the peninſula, were, in ſome degree, reclaimed from their brutal manners, by a gradual intercourſe with the Grecian colonies, which ſettled along the maritime coaſt. The little kingdom of Boſphorus, whoſe capital was ſituated on the Straits, through which the Mæotis communicates itſelf to the Euxine, was compoſed of degenerate Greeks, and half civilized barbarians. It ſubſiſted, as an independent ſtate, from the time of the Peloponneſian war [98], was at laſt ſwallowed up by the ambition of Mithridates [99], and, with the reſt of his dominions, ſunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From the reign of Auguſtus [100], the kings of Boſphorus were the humble, but not uſeleſs, allies of the empire. By preſents, by arms, and by a ſlight fortification drawn acroſs the Iſthmus, they effectually guarded againſt the roving plunderers of Sarmatia, the acceſs of a country, which, from its peculiar ſituation and convenient harbours, commanded the Euxine ſea and Aſia Minor [101]. As long as the ſceptre was poſſeſſed by a lineal ſucceſſion of kings, they acquitted themſelves of their important charge with vigilance and ſucceſs. Domeſtic factions, and the fears, or private in-

98 Strabo, l. vii. p. 309. The firſt kings of Boſphorus were the allies of Athens.

99 Appian in Mithridat.

100 It was reduced by the arms of Agrippa. Oroſius, vi. 21. Eutropius, vii. 9. The Romans once advanced within three days march of the Tanais. Tacit. Annal. xii. 17.

101 See the Toxaris of Lucian, if we credit the ſincerity and the virtues of the Scythian, who relates a great war of his nation againſt the kings of Boſphorus.

tereſt,

tereſt, of obſcure uſurpers, who ſeized on the vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart of Boſphorus. With the acquiſition of a ſuperfluous waſte of fertile ſoil, the conquerors obtained the command of a naval force, ſufficient to tranſport their armies to the coaſt of Aſia [102]. The ſhips uſed in the navigation of the Euxine were of a very ſingular conſtruction. They were ſlight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only, without the leaſt mixture of iron, and occaſionally covered with a ſhelving roof, on the appearance of a tempeſt [103]. In theſe floating houſes, the Goths careleſsly truſted themſelves to the mercy of an unknown ſea, under the conduct of ſailors preſſed into the ſervice, and whoſe ſkill and fidelity were equally ſuſpicious. But the hopes of plunder had baniſhed every idea of danger, and a natural fearleſſneſs of temper ſupplied in their minds the more rational confidence, which is the juſt reſult of knowledge and experience. Warriors of ſuch a daring ſpirit muſt have often murmured againſt the cowardice of their guides, who required the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of a ſettled calm before they would venture to embark; and would ſcarcely ever be tempted to loſe ſight of the land. Such, at leaſt, is the practice of the modern Turks [104]; and they are probably not inferior, in the art of navigation, to the ancient inhabitants of Boſphorus.

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who acquire a naval force.

[102] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 28.

[103] Strabo, l. xi. Tacit. Hiſt. iii. 47.—They were called *Camaræ*.

[104] See a very natural picture of the Euxine navigation, in the xvith letter of Tournefort.

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First naval expedition of the Goths.

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coaſt of Circaſſia on the left hand, firſt appeared before Pityus [105], the utmoſt limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port, and fortified with a ſtrong wall. Here they met with a reſiſtance more obſtinate than they had reaſon to expect from the feeble garriſon of a diſtant fortreſs. They were repulſed; and their diſappointment ſeemed to diminiſh the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Succeſſianus, an officer of ſuperior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual; but as ſoon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but leſs important ſtation, they reſumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the deſtruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former diſgrace [106].

The Goths beſiege and take Trebizond.

Circling round the eaſtern extremity of the Euxine ſea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebizond is about three hundred miles [107]. The courſe of the Goths carried them in ſight of the country of Colchis, ſo famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without ſucceſs, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phaſis. Trebizond, celebrated in the retreat of the ten thouſand as an ancient colony of Greeks [108], derived its wealth

[105] Arrian places the frontier garriſon at Dioſcurias, or Sebaſtopolis, forty-four miles to the eaſt of Pityus. The garriſon of Phaſis conſiſted in his time of only four hundred foot. See the Periplus of the Euxine.

[106] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 30.

[107] Arrian (in Periplo Maris Euxin. p. 130.) calls the diſtance 2610 ſtadia.

[108] Xenophon. Anabaſis, l. iv. p. 348. Edit. Hutchinſon.

and

and ſplendour from the munificence of the emperor Hadrian, who had conſtructed an artificial port on a coaſt left deſtitute by nature of ſecure harbours [109]. The city was large and populous; a double encloſure of walls ſeemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the uſual garriſon had been ſtrengthened by a reinforcement of ten thouſand men. But there are not any advantages capable of ſupplying the abſence of diſcipline and vigilance. The numerous garriſon of Trebizond, diſſolved in riot and luxury, diſdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths ſoon diſcovered the ſupine negligence of the beſieged, erected a lofty pile of faſcines, aſcended the walls in the ſilence of the night, and entered the defenceleſs city, ſword in hand. A general maſſacre of the people enſued, whilſt the affrighted ſoldiers eſcaped through the oppoſite gates of the town. The moſt holy temples, and the moſt ſplendid edifices, were involved in a common deſtruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immenſe: the wealth of the adjacent countries had been depoſited in Trebizond, as in a ſecure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without oppoſition through the extenſive province of Pontus [110]. The rich ſpoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ſhips that had been found in the port. The robuſt youth of the

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[109] Arrian, p. 129. The general obſervation is Tournefort's.

[110] See an epiſtle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, biſhop of Neo-Cæſarea, quoted by Maſcou, v. 37.

ſea-

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ſea-coaſt were chained to the oar; and the Goths, ſatisfied with the ſucceſs of their firſt naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new eſtabliſhments in the kingdom of Boſphorus [111].

The ſecond expedition of the Goths.

The ſecond expedition of the Goths was undertaken with greater powers of men and ſhips; but they ſteered a different courſe, and, diſdaining the exhauſted provinces of Pontus, followed the weſtern coaſt of the Euxine, paſſed before the wide mouths of the Boryſthenes, the Nieſter, and the Danube, and increaſing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fiſhing barks, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine ſea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Aſia. The garriſon of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the Strait; and ſo inconſiderable were the dreaded invaſions of the barbarians, that this body of troops ſurpaſſed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they ſurpaſſed it. They deſerted with precipitation their advantageous poſt, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, moſt plentifully ſtored with arms and money, to the diſcretion of the conquerors. Whilſt they heſitated whether they ſhould prefer the ſea or land, Europe or Aſia, for the ſcene of their hoſtilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia, once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and eaſy conqueſt. He guided the march, which

They plunder the cities of Bithynia.

[111] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 32, 33.

was

was only sixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon [112], directed the resistless attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned sufficient policy to reward the traitor, whom they detested. Nice, Prusa, Apæmæa, Cius, cities that had sometimes rivalled, or imitated, the splendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the same calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without controul through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the soft inhabitants of Asia, had abolished the exercise of arms, and removed the apprehension of danger. The ancient walls were suffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the most opulent cities was reserved for the construction of baths, temples, and theatres [113]. CHAP. X.

When the city of Cyzicus withstood the utmost effort of Mithridates [114], it was distinguished by wise laws, a naval power of two hundred gallies, and three arsenals; of arms, of military engines, and of corn [115]. It was still the seat of wealth and luxury; but of its ancient strength, nothing remained except the situation, in a little island of the Propontis, connected with the continent of Asia only by two bridges. From the recent sack of Prusa, the Goths advanced within eighteen miles [116] of the city, which they had Retreat of the Goths.

112 Itiner. Hierosolym. p. 572. Wesseling.

113 Zosimus, l. i. p. 32, 33.

114 He besieged the place with 400 gallies, 150,000 foot, and a numerous cavalry. See Plutarch in Lucul. Appian in Mithridat. Cicero pro Lege Manilia, c. 8.

115 Strabo, l. xii. p. 573.

116 Pocock's Description of the East, l. ii. c. 23, 24.

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devoted to deſtruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The ſeaſon was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reſervoir of all the ſprings of Mount Olympus, roſe to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhyndacus, which iſſues from the lake, ſwelled into a broad and rapid ſtream, and ſtopped the progreſs of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been ſtationed, was attended by a long train of waggons, laden with the ſpoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicomedia, which they wantonly burnt [117]. Some obſcure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that ſecured their retreat [118]. But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox ſummoned them to haſten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is eſteemed by the modern Turks the moſt unqueſtionable inſtance of raſhneſs and folly [119].

Third naval expedition of the Goths.

When we are informed that the third fleet, equipped by the Goths in the ports of Boſphorus, conſiſted of five hundred ſail of ſhips [120], our ready imagination inſtantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are aſſured

[117] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 33.

[118] Syncellus tells an unintelligible ſtory of Prince *Odenathus*, who defeated the Goths, and who was killed by Prince *Odenathus*.

[119] Voyages de Chardin, tom. i. p. 45. He ſailed with the Turks from Conſtantinople to Caffa.

[120] Syncellus (p. 382.) ſpeaks of this expedition, as undertaken by the Heruli.

by

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by the judicious Strabo [121], that the piratical veſſels uſed by the barbarians of Pontus and the Leſſer Scythia, were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may ſafely affirm, that fifteen thouſand warriors, at the moſt, embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they ſteered their deſtructive courſe from the Cimmerian to the Thracian Boſphorus. When they had almoſt gained the middle of the Straits, they were ſuddenly driven back to the entrance of them; till a favourable wind, ſpringing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid ſea, or rather lake, of the Propontis. Their landing on the little iſland of Cyzicus was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From thence iſſuing again through the narrow paſſage of the Helleſpont, they purſued their winding navigation amidſt the numerous iſlands ſcattered over the Archipelago, or the Ægean Sea. The aſſiſtance of captives and deſerters muſt have been very neceſſary to pilot their veſſels, and to direct their various incurſions, as well on the coaſt of Greece as on that of Aſia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles diſtant from Athens [122], which had attempted to make ſome preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities againſt the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls fallen to decay ſince the time of

They paſs the Boſphorus and the Helleſpont,

[121] Strabo, l. xi. p. 495.

[122] Plin Hiſt. Natur. iii. 7.

Sylla.

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Sylla. The efforts of his ſkill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became maſters of the native ſeat of the muſes and the arts. But while the conquerors abandoned themſelves to the licence of plunder and intemperance, their fleet, that lay with a ſlender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexippus, who, flying with the engineer Cleodamus from the ſack of Athens, collected a haſty band of volunteers, peaſants as well as ſoldiers, and in ſome meaſure avenged the calamities of his country [123].

ravage Greece and threaten Italy.

But this exploit, whatever luſtre it might ſhed on the declining age of Athens, ſerved rather to irritate than to ſubdue the undaunted ſpirit of the northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the ſame time in every diſtrict of Greece. Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged ſuch memorable wars againſt each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by ſea, ſpread from the eaſtern point of Sunium to the weſtern coaſt of Epirus. The Goths had already advanced within ſight of Italy, when the approach of ſuch imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleaſure. The emperor appeared in arms;

[123] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 181. Victor, c. 33. Oroſius, vii. 42. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 35. Zonaras, l. xii. 635. Syncellus, p. 382. It is not without ſome attention, that we can explain and conciliate their imperfect hints. We can ſtill diſcover ſome traces of the partiality of Dexippus, in the relation of his own and his countrymen's exploits.

and

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Their diviſions and retreat.

and his preſence ſeems to have checked the ardour, and to have divided the ſtrength, of the enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, accepted an honourable capitulation, entered with a large body of his countrymen into the ſervice of Rome, and was inveſted with the ornaments of the conſular dignity, which had never before been profaned by the hands of a barbarian [124]. Great numbers of the Goths, diſguſted with the perils and hardſhips of a tedious voyage, broke into Mæſia, with a deſign of forcing their way over the Danube to their ſettlements in the Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved inevitable deſtruction, if the diſcord of the Roman generals had not opened to the barbarians the means of an eſcape [125]. The ſmall remainder of this deſtroying hoſt returned on board their veſſels; and meaſuring back their way through the Helleſpont and the Boſphorus, ravaged in their paſſage the ſhores of Troy, whoſe fame, immortalized by Homer, will probably ſurvive the memory of the Gothic conqueſts. As ſoon as they found themſelves in ſafety within the baſon of the Euxine, they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near the foot of Mount Hæmus: and, after all their toils, indulged themſelves in the uſe of thoſe pleaſant and ſalutary hot baths. What remained

[124] Syncellus, p. 382. This body of Heruli was for a long time faithful and famous.

[125] Claudius, who commanded on the Danube, thought with propriety and acted with ſpirit. His colleague was jealous of his fame. Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 181.

of

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of the voyage was a ſhort and eaſy navigation [126]. Such was the various fate of this third and greateſt of their naval enterpriſes. It may ſeem difficult to conceive, how the original body of fifteen thouſand warriors could ſuſtain the loſſes and diviſions of ſo bold an adventure. But as their numbers were gradually waſted by the ſword, by ſhipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deſerters, who flocked to the ſtandard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive ſlaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly ſeized the glorious opportunity of freedom and revenge. In theſe expeditions, the Gothic nation claimed a ſuperior ſhare of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners are ſometimes diſtinguiſhed and ſometimes confounded in the imperfect hiſtories of that age; and as the barbarian fleets ſeemed to iſſue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians was frequently beſtowed on the mixed multitude [127].

Ruin of the temple of Epheſus.

In the general calamities of mankind, the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are paſſed over with careleſs inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Epheſus, after having riſen with increaſing ſplendour from ſeven re-

126 Jornandes, c. 20.

127 Zoſimus and the Greeks (as the author of the Philopatris) give the name of Scythians to thoſe whom Jornandes, and the Latin writers, conſtantly repreſent as Goths.

peated misfortunes [128], was finally burnt by the Goths in their third naval invaſion. The arts of Greece, and the wealth of Aſia, had conſpired to erect that ſacred and magnificent ſtructure. It was ſupported by an hundred and twenty-ſeven marble columns of the Ionic order. They were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was ſixty feet high. The altar was adorned with the maſterly ſculptures of Praxiteles, who had, perhaps, ſelected from the favourite legends of the place, the birth of the divine children of Latona, the concealment of Apollo after the ſlaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of Bacchus to the vanquiſhed Amazons [129]. Yet the length of the temple of Epheſus was only four hundred and twenty-five feet, about two-thirds of the meaſure of the church of St. Peter's at Rome [130]. In the other dimenſions, it was ſtill more inferior to that ſublime production of modern architecture. The ſpreading arms of a Chriſtian croſs require a much greater breadth than the oblong temples of the Pagans; and the boldeſt artiſts of antiquity would have been ſtartled at the propoſal of raiſing in the air a dome of the ſize and proportions of the pantheon. The temple of Diana was, however, admired as one of the wonders of the world. Succeſſive empires, the Perſian, the

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[128] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 178. Jornandes, c. 20.

[129] Strabo, l. xiv. p. 640. Vitruvius, l. i. c. i. præfat. l. vii. Tacit. Annal. iii. 61. Plin. Hiſt. Nat. xxxvi. 14.

[130] The length of St. Peter's is 840 Roman palms; each palm is very little ſhort of nine Engliſh inches. See Greaves's Miſcellanies, vol. i. p. 233; On the Roman foot.

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Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its ſanctity, and enriched its ſplendour [131]. But the rude ſavages of the Baltic were deſtitute of a taſte for the elegant arts, and they deſpiſed the ideal terrors of a foreign ſuperſtition [132].

Conduct of the Goths at Athens.

Another circumſtance is related of theſe invaſions, which might deſerve our notice, were it not juſtly to be ſuſpected as the fanciful conceit of a recent ſophiſt. We are told, that, in the ſack of Athens, the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of ſetting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, diſſuaded them from the deſign; by the profound obſervation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the ſtudy of books, they would never apply themſelves to the exerciſe of arms [133]. The ſagacious counſellor (ſhould the truth of the fact be admitted), reaſoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the moſt polite and powerful nations, genius of every kind has diſplayed itſelf about the ſame period; and the age of ſcience has generally been the age of military virtue and ſucceſs.

[131] The policy, however, of the Romans induced them to abridge the extent of the ſanctuary or aſylum, which by ſucceſſive privileges had ſpread itſelf two ſtadia round the temple. Strabo, l. xiv. p. 641. Tacit. Annal. iii. 60, &c.

[132] They offered no ſacrifices to the Grecian gods. See Epiſtol. Gregor. Thaumat.

[133] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 635. Such an anecdote was perfectly ſuited to the taſte of Montaigne. He makes uſe of it in his agreeable Eſſay on Pedantry, l. i. c. 24.

IV. The.

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Conqueſt of Armenia by the Perſians.

IV. The new ſovereigns of Perſia, Artaxerxes and his ſon Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already ſeen) over the houſe of Arſaces. Of the many princes of that ancient race, Choſroes, king of Armenia, had alone preſerved both his life and his independence. He defended himſelf by the natural ſtrength of his country; by the perpetual reſort of fugitives and malecontents; by the alliance of the Romans, and, above all, by his own courage. Invincible in arms, during a thirty years war, he was at length aſſaſſinated by the emiſſaries of Sapor king of Perſia. The patriotic ſatraps of Armenia, who aſſerted the freedom and dignity of the crown, implored the protection of Rome in favour of Tiridates the lawful heir. But the ſon of Choſroes was an infant, the allies were at a diſtance, and the Perſian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irreſiſtible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was ſaved by the fidelity of a ſervant, and Armenia continued above twenty-ſeven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy of Perſia [134]. Elated with this eaſy conqueſt, and preſuming on the diſtreſſes or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the ſtrong garriſons of Carrhæ and Niſibis to ſurrender, and ſpread devaſtation and terror on either ſide of the Euphrates.

[134] Moſes Chorenenſis, l. ii. c. 71. 73, 74. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628. The authentic relation of the Armenian hiſtorian ſerves to rectify the confuſed account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children of Tiridates, who at that time was himſelf an infant.

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Valerian marches into the East.

The loſs of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid ſucceſs of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep ſenſe of the inſult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himſelf, that the vigilance of his lieutenants would ſufficiently provide for the ſafety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he reſolved, notwithſtanding his advanced age, to march in perſon to the defence of the Euphrates. During his progreſs through Aſia Minor, the naval enterpriſes of the Goths were ſuſpended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a tranſient and fallacious calm. He paſſed the Euphrates, encountered the Perſian monarch near the walls of Edeſſa, was vanquiſhed, and taken priſoner by Sapor. The particulars of this great event are darkly and imperfectly repreſented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may diſcover a long ſeries of imprudence, of error, and of deſerved misfortune on the ſide of the Roman emperor. He repoſed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his Prætorian præfect [135]. That worthleſs miniſter rendered his maſter formidable only to the oppreſſed ſubjects, and contemptible to the enemies of Rome [136]. By his weak or wicked counſels, the Imperial army was betrayed into a ſituation, where valour and military ſkill were equally unavailing [137]. The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Perſian hoſt, was repulſed with great

Is defeated and taken priſoner by Sapor king of Perſia. A.D. 260.

[135] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 191. As Macrianus was an enemy to the Chriſtians, they charged him with being a magician.

[136] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 33. [137] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 174.

ſlaughter;

slaughter [138]; and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage of famine and pestilence had ensured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamours demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and insisted on a personal conference with the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of intrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and his astonished troops laid down their arms [139]. In such a moment of triumph, the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure. Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained with every vice, was chosen to dishonour the Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army [140].

[138] Victor in Cæsar. Eutropius, ix. 7.

[139] Zosimus, l. i. p. 33. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630. Peter Patricius, in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29.

[140] Hist. August. p. 185. The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most inaccurate writer.

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Sapor overruns Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia.

The Imperial ſlave was eager to ſecure the favour of his maſter by an act of treaſon to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and, by the way of Chalcis, to the metropolis of the Eaſt. So rapid were the motions of the Perſian cavalry, that, if we may credit a very judicious hiſtorian [141], the city of Antioch was ſurpriſed when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the amuſements of the theatre. The ſplendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or deſtroyed; and the numerous inhabitants were put to the ſword, or led away into captivity [142]. The tide of devaſtation was ſtopped for a moment by the reſolution of the high prieſt of Emeſa. Arrayed in his ſacerdotal robes, he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peaſants, armed only with ſlings, and defended his god and his property from the ſacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroaſter [143]. But the ruin of Tarſus, and of many other cities, furniſhes a melancholy proof, that, except in this ſingular inſtance, the conqueſt of Syria and Cilicia ſcarcely interrupted the progreſs of the Perſian arms. The advantages of the narrow paſſes of mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader, whoſe principal force conſiſted in his cavalry, would have been engaged in a very unequal combat;

[141] The ſack of Antioch, anticipated by ſome hiſtorians, is aſſigned, by the deciſive teſtimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus, xxiii. 5.

[142] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 35.

[143] John Malala, tom. i. p. 391. He corrupts this probable event by ſome fabulous circumſtances.

and

and Sapor was permitted to form the ſiege of Cæſarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the ſecond rank, which was ſuppoſed to contain four hundred thouſand inhabitants. Demoſthenes commanded in the place, not ſo much by the commiſſion of the emperor, as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and, when at laſt Cæſarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a phyſician, he cut his way through the Perſians, who had been ordered to exert their utmoſt diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief eſcaped the power of a foe, who might either have honoured or puniſhed his obſtinate valour; but many thouſands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general maſſacre, and Sapor is accuſed of treating his priſoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty [144]. Much ſhould undoubtedly be allowed for national animoſity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain that the ſame prince, who in Armenia had diſplayed the mild aſpect of a legiſlator, ſhewed himſelf to the Romans under the ſtern features of a conqueror. He deſpaired of making any permanent eſtabliſhment in the empire, and ſought only to leave behind him a waſted deſert, whilſt he tranſported into Perſia the people and the treaſures of the provinces [145].

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[144] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630. Deep vallies were filled up with the ſlain. Crowds of priſoners were driven to water like beaſts, and many periſhed for want of food.

[145] Zoſimus, l. i. p. 25. aſſerts, that Sapor, had he not preferred ſpoil to conqueſt, might have remained maſter of Aſia.

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Boldneſs and ſucceſs of Odenathus againſt Sapor.

At the time when the Eaſt trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a preſent not unworthy of the greateſt kings; a long train of camels laden with the moſt rare and valuable merchandiſes. The rich offering was accompanied with an epiſtle, reſpectful but not ſervile, from Odenathus, one of the nobleſt and moſt opulent ſenators of Palmyra. "Who is this Odenathus," (ſaid the haughty victor, and he commanded that the preſents ſhould be caſt into the Euphrates) "that he thus inſolently preſumes to "write to his lord? If he entertains a hope of "mitigating his puniſhments, let him fall pro"ſtrate before the foot of our throne with his "hands bound behind his back. Should he "heſitate, ſwift deſtruction ſhall be poured on "his head, on his whole race, and on his coun"try[146]." The deſperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced, called into action all the latent powers of his ſoul. He met Sapor; but he met him in arms. Infuſing his own ſpirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria[147], and the tents of the deſert[148], he hovered round the Perſian hoſt, haraſſed their retreat, carried off part of the treaſure, and, what was dearer than any treaſure, ſeveral of the

[146] Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29.

[147] Syrorum agreſtium manû. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus Victor, the Auguſtan Hiſtory (p. 192.), and ſeveral inſcriptions agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra.

[148] He poſſeſſed ſo powerful an intereſt among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Perſic. l. ii. c. 5.) and John Malala (tom. i. p. 391.) ſtyle him prince of the Saracens.

women

women of the Great King; who was at laſt obliged to repaſs the Euphrates with ſome marks of haſte and confuſion [149]. By this exploit, Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortunes. The majeſty of Rome, oppreſſed by a Perſian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

Treatment of Valerian.

The voice of hiſtory, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuſe of the rights of conqueſt. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but inveſted with the Imperial purple, was expoſed to the multitude, a conſtant ſpectacle of fallen greatneſs; and that whenever the Perſian monarch mounted on horſeback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithſtanding all the remonſtrances of his allies, who repeatedly adviſed him to remember the viciſſitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illuſtrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of inſult, Sapor ſtill remained inflexible. When Valerian ſunk under the weight of ſhame and grief, his ſkin, ſtuffed with ſtraw, and formed into the likeneſs of a human figure, was preſerved for ages in the moſt celebrated temple of Perſia; a more real monument of triumph, than the fancied trophies of braſs and marble ſo often erected by Roman vanity [150]. The tale is moral and pathetic,

[149] Peter Patricius, p. 25.

[150] The Pagan writers lament, the Chriſtian inſult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various teſtimonies are accurately collected by

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pathetic, but the truth of it may very fairly be called in queſtion. The letters ſtill extant from the princes of the Eaſt to Sapor, are manifeſt forgeries [151]; nor is it natural to ſuppoſe that a jealous monarch ſhould, even in the perſon of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majeſty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Perſia, it is at leaſt certain, that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy, languiſhed away his life in hopeleſs captivity.

Character and adminiſtration of Gallienus.

The emperor Gallienus, who had long ſupported with impatience the cenſorial ſeverity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with ſecret pleaſure and avowed indifference. "I knew that my father was a "mortal," ſaid he; "and ſince he has acted as "becomes a brave man, I am ſatisfied." Whilſt Rome lamented the fate of her ſovereign, the ſavage coldneſs of his ſon was extolled by the ſervile courtiers, as the perfect firmneſs of a hero and a ſtoic [152]. It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconſtant character of Gallienus, which he diſplayed without conſtraint, as ſoon as he became ſole poſſeſſor of the empire. In every art that he attempted, his lively genius

by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 739, &c. So little has been preſerved of eaſtern hiſtory before Mahomet, that the modern Perſians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event ſo glorious to their nation. See Bibliotheque Orientale.

[151] One of theſe epiſtles is from Artavaſdes, king of Armenia: ſince Armenia was then a province in Perſia, the king, the kingdom, and the epiſtle, muſt be fictitious.

[152] See his life in the Auguſtan Hiſtory.

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enabled him to ſucceed; and as his genius was deſtitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a maſter of ſeveral curious but uſeleſs ſciences, a ready orator, and elegant poet[153], a ſkilful gardener, an excellent cook, and moſt contemptible prince. When the great emergencies of the ſtate required his preſence and attention, he was engaged in converſation with the philoſopher Plotinus[154], waſting his time in trifling or licentious pleaſures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian myſteries, or ſoliciting a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His profuſe magnificence inſulted the general poverty; the ſolemn ridicule of his triumphs impreſſed a deeper ſenſe of the public diſgrace[155]. The repeated

153 There is ſtill extant a very pretty Epithalamium, compoſed by Gallienus for the nuptials of his nephews.

Ite ait, O Juvenes, pariter ſudate medullis
Omnibus, inter vos: non murmura veſtra columbæ,
Brachia non Hederæ, non vincant oſcula Conchæ.

154 He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Campania, to try the experiment of realizing Plato's Republic. See the Life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius's Biblioth. Græc. l. iv.

155 A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed the antiquarians by its legend and reverſe; the former *Galliena Auguſtæ*, the latter *Ubique Pax*. M. Spanheim ſuppoſes that the coin was ſtruck by ſome of the enemies of Gallienus, and was deſigned as a ſevere ſatire on that effeminate prince. But as the uſe of irony may ſeem unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has deduced from a paſſage of Trebellius Pollio (Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 198.) an ingenious and natural ſolution. *Galliena* was firſt couſin to the emperor. By delivering Africa from the uſurper Celſus, ſhe deſerved the title of Auguſta. On a medal in the French king's collection, we read a ſimilar inſcription of *Fauſtina Auguſta* round the head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the *Ubique Pax*, it is eaſily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who ſeized, perhaps, the

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repeated intelligence of invaſions, defeats, and rebellions, he received with a careleſs ſmile; and ſingling out, with affected contempt, ſome particular production of the loſt province, he careleſsly aſked, whether Rome muſt be ruined, unleſs it was ſupplied with linen from Egypt, and Arras cloth from Gaul? There were, however, a few ſhort moments in the life of Gallienus, when, exaſperated by ſome recent injury, he ſuddenly appeared the intrepid ſoldier and the cruel tyrant; till, ſatiated with blood, or fatigued by reſiſtance, he inſenſibly ſunk into the natural mildneſs and indolence of his character [156].

The thirty tyrants.

At a time when the reins of government were held with ſo looſe a hand, it is not ſurpriſing that a crowd of uſurpers ſhould ſtart up in every province of the empire againſt the ſon of Valerian. It was probably ſome ingenious fancy, of comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers of the Auguſtan hiſtory to ſelect that celebrated number, which has been gradually received into a popular appellation [157]. But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What reſemblance can we diſcover between a council

the occaſion of ſome momentary calm. See Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres, Janvier 1700. p. 21—34.

156 This ſingular character has, I believe, been fairly tranſmitted to us. The reign of his immediate ſucceſſor was ſhort and buſy; and the hiſtorians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Conſtantine, could not have the moſt remote intereſt to miſrepreſent the character of Gallienus.

157 Pollio expreſſes the moſt minute anxiety to complete the number.

of

of thirty perſons, the united oppreſſors of a ſingle city, and an uncertain liſt of independent rivals, who roſe and fell in irregular ſucceſſion through the extent of a vaſt empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed, unleſs we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the Imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, diſtracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne; Cyriades, Macrianus, Baliſta, Odenathus, and Zenobia, in the eaſt; in Gaul, and the weſtern provinces, Poſthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus[158], Saturninus; in Iſauria, Trebellianus; Piſo in Theſſaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celſus in Africa. To illuſtrate the obſcure monuments of the life and death of each individual, would prove a laborious taſk, alike barren of inſtruction and of amuſement. We may content ourſelves with inveſtigating ſome general characters, that moſt ſtrongly mark the condition of the times, and the manners of the men, their pretenſions, their motives, their fate, and the deſtructive conſequences of their uſurpation[159].

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Their real number was no more than nineteen.

It is ſufficiently known, that the odious appellation of *Tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to expreſs the illegal ſeizure of ſupreme

Character and merit of the tyrants.

[158] The place of his reign is ſomewhat doubtful; but there *was* a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the ſeat of all the others.

[159] Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1163, reckons them ſomewhat differently.

power,

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power, without any reference to the abuſe of it. Several of the pretenders, who raiſed the ſtandard of rebellion againſt the emperor Gallienus, were ſhining models of virtue, and almoſt all poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the moſt important commands of the empire. The generals, who aſſumed the title of Auguſtus, were either reſpected by their troops for their able conduct and ſevere diſcipline, or admired for valour and ſucceſs in war, or beloved for frankneſs and generoſity. The field of victory was often the ſcene of their election; and even the armourer Marius, the moſt contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was diſtinguiſhed however by intrepid courage, matchleſs ſtrength, and blunt honeſty[160]. His mean and recent trade caſt indeed an air of ridicule on his elevation; but his birth could not be more obſcure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peaſants, and inliſted in the army as private ſoldiers. In times of confuſion, every active genius finds the place aſſigned him by Nature: in a general ſtate of war, military merit is the road to glory and to greatneſs. Of the nineteen tyrants, Tetricus only was a ſenator; Piſo alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight ſucceſſive generations, ran in the veins of Calphur-

Their obſcure birth.

[160] See the ſpeech of Marius, in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 197. The accidental identity of names was the only circumſtance that could tempt Pollio to imitate Salluſt.

nius

nius Piſo [161], who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting, in his houſe, the images of Craſſus and of the great Pompey [162]. His anceſtors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could beſtow; and of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had ſurvived the tyranny of the Cæſars. The perſonal qualities of Piſo added new luſtre to his race. The uſurper Valens, by whoſe order he was killed, confeſſed, with deep remorſe, that even an enemy ought to have reſpected the ſanctity of Piſo; and although he died in arms againſt Gallienus, the ſenate, with the emperor's generous permiſſion, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of ſo virtuous a rebel [163].

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The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father whom they eſteemed. They diſdained to ſerve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy ſon. The throne of the Roman world was unſupported by any principle of loyalty; and treaſon againſt ſuch a prince might eaſily be conſidered as patriotiſm to the ſtate. Yet if we examine with candour the conduct of theſe

The cauſes of their rebellion.

161 Vos, O Pompilius ſanguis! is Horace's addreſs to the Piſos. See Art. Poet. v. 292. with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.

162 Tacit. Annal. xv. 48. Hiſt. i. 15. In the former of theſe paſſages we may venture to change *paternæ* into *maternæ*. In every generation from Auguſtus to Alexander Severus, one or more Piſos appear as conſuls. A Piſo was deemed worthy of the throne by Auguſtus (Tacit. Annal. i. 13.). A ſecond headed a formidable conſpiracy againſt Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Cæſar by Galba.

163 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 195. The ſenate, in a moment of enthuſiaſm, ſeems to have preſumed on the approbation of Gallienus.

uſurpers,

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uſurpers, it will appear, that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears, than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel ſuſpicions of Gallienus; they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deſerving of the purple, they were marked for ſure deſtruction; and even prudence would counſel them, to ſecure a ſhort enjoyment of empire, and rather to try the fortune of war, than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the ſoldiers inveſted the reluctant victims with the enſigns of ſovereign authority, they ſometimes mourned in ſecret their approaching fate. "You have loſt," ſaid Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you have loſt a uſeful commander, and you "have made a very wretched emperor [164]."

Their violent deaths.

The apprehenſions of Saturninus were juſtified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who ſtarted up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As ſoon as they were inveſted with the bloody purple, they inſpired their adherents with the ſame fears and ambition which had occaſioned their own revolt. Encompaſſed with domeſtic conſpiracy, military ſedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or ſhorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably loſt. Theſe precarious monarchs

[164] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 196.

received,

received, however, such honours, as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could bestow; but their claim, founded on rebellion, could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the senate, constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended, indeed, to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honourable distinction, by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans, and the consent of Gallienus, the senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to intrust him with the government of the East, which he already possessed, in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow Zenobia [165].

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Fatal consequences of these usurpations.

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher; were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops, by an immense donative, drawn from the bowels of the exhausted

165 The association of the brave Palmyrenian was the most popular act of the whole reign of Gallienus. Hist. August. p. 180.

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people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themſelves reduced to the hard neceſſity of ſupporting their uſurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is ſtill extant a moſt ſavage mandate from Gallienus to one of his miniſters, after the ſuppreſſion of Ingenuus, who had aſſumed the purple in Illyricum. "It "is not enough," ſays that ſoft but inhuman prince, "that you exterminate ſuch as have ap- "peared in arms: the chance of battle might "have ſerved me as effectually. The male ſex "of every age muſt be extirpated; provided "that, in the execution of the children and old "men, you can contrive means to ſave our "reputation. Let every one die who has dropt "an expreſſion, who has entertained a thought "againſt me, againſt *me*, the ſon of Valerian, "the father and brother of ſo many princes [166]. "Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor; "tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with "my own hand, and would inſpire you with "my own feelings [167]." Whilſt the public forces of the ſtate were diſſipated in private quarrels,

[166] Gallienus had given the titles of Cæſar and Auguſtus to his ſon Saloninus, ſlain at Cologn by the uſurper Poſthumus. A ſecond ſon of Gallienus ſucceeded to the name and rank of his elder brother. Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was alſo aſſociated to the empire; ſeveral other brothers, ſiſters, nephews, and nieces of the emperor, formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom. iii. and M. de Brequigny in the Memoires de l'Academie, tom. xxxii. p. 262.

[167] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 188.

the

the defenceleſs provinces lay expoſed to every invader. The braveſt uſurpers were compelled, by the perplexity of their ſituation, to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchaſe with oppreſſive tributes the neutrality or ſervices of the barbarians, and to introduce hoſtile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy [168]. CHAP. X.

Such were the barbarians, and ſuch the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, diſmembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the loweſt pitch of diſgrace and ruin, from whence it ſeemed impoſſible that it ſhould ever emerge. As far as the barrenneſs of materials would permit, we have attempted to trace, with order and perſpicuity, the general events of that calamitous period. There ſtill remain ſome particular facts; I. The diſorders of Sicily; II. The tumults of Alexandria; and, III. The rebellion of the Iſaurians, which may ſerve to reflect a ſtrong light on the horrid picture.

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by ſucceſs and impunity, publicly defy, inſtead of eluding the juſtice of their country, we may ſafely infer, that the exceſſive weakneſs of the government is felt and abuſed by the loweſt ranks of the community. The ſituation of Sicily preſerved it from the barbarians; nor could the diſarmed province have ſupported an uſurper. The ſufferings of that Diſorders of Sicily.

168 Regillianus had ſome bands of Roxolani in his ſervice. Poſthumus a body of Franks. It was perhaps in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themſelves into Spain.

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once flouriſhing and ſtill fertile iſland, were inflicted by baſer hands. A licentious crowd of ſlaves and peaſants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the ſervile wars of more ancient times [169]. Devaſtations, of which the huſbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, muſt have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal eſtates were the property of the opulent ſenators of Rome, who often encloſed within a farm the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable, that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply, than all the conqueſts of the Goths or the Perſians.

Tumults of Alexandria.

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble deſign, at once conceived and executed by the ſon of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, ſecond only to Rome itſelf, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles [170]; it was peopled by three hundred thouſand free inhabitants, beſides at leaſt an equal number of ſlaves [171]. The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria to the capital and provinces of the empire. Idleneſs was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glaſs, others in weaving of linen, others again manufacturing the papyrus. Either ſex, and every age, was engaged in the purſuits of induſtry, nor did even the blind or the lame want

169 The Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 177, calls it *ſervile bellum*. See Diodor. Sicul. l. xxxiv.

170 Plin. Hiſt. Natur. v. 10.

171 Diodor. Sicul. l. xvii. p. 590. Edit. Weſſeling.

occu-

occupations ſuited to their condition [172]. But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconſtancy of the Greeks, with the ſuperſtition and obſtinacy of the Egyptians. The moſt trifling occaſion, a tranſient ſcarcity of fleſh or lentils, the neglect of an accuſtomed ſalutation, a miſtake of precedency in the public baths, or even a religious diſpute [173], were at any time ſufficient to kindle a ſedition among that vaſt multitude, whoſe reſentments were furious and implacable [174]. After the captivity of Valerian and the inſolence of his ſon had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themſelves to the ungoverned rage of their paſſions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few ſhort and ſuſpicious truces) above twelve years [175]. All intercourſe was cut off between the ſeveral quarters of the afflicted city, every ſtreet was polluted with blood, every building of ſtrength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults ſubſide, till a conſiderable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The ſpacious and magnificent diſtrict of Bruchion, with its palaces and muſæum, the reſidence of the

[172] See a very curious letter of Hadrian in the Auguſtan Hiſtory, p. 245.

[173] Such as the ſacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. l. i.

[174] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 195. This long and terrible ſedition was firſt occaſioned by a diſpute between a ſoldier and a townſman about a pair of ſhoes.

[175] Dionyſius apud Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. vol. vii. p. 21. Ammian. xxii. 16.

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kings and philoſophers of Egypt, is deſcribed above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its preſent ſtate of dreary ſolitude [176].

Rebellion of the Iſaurians.

III. The obſcure rebellion of Trebellianus, who aſſumed the purple in Iſauria, a petty province of Aſia Minor, was attended with ſtrange and memorable conſequences. The pageant of royalty was ſoon deſtroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, deſpairing of mercy, reſolved to ſhake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor, but to the empire, and ſuddenly returned to the ſavage manners, from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide-extended Taurus, protected their inacceſſible retreat. The tillage of ſome fertile vallies [177] ſupplied them with neceſſaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Iſaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakneſs, by ſurrounding the hoſtile and independent ſpot, with a ſtrong chain of fortifications [178], which often proved inſufficient to reſtrain the incurſions of theſe domeſtic foes. The Iſaurians, gradually extending their territory to the ſea-coaſt, ſubdued the weſtern and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the neſt of thoſe daring

[176] Scaliger. Animadver. ad Euſeb. Chron. p. 258. Three diſſertations of M. Bonamy, in the Mem. de l'Academie, tom. ix.

[177] Strabo, l. xii. p. 569.

[178] Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 197.

pirates, againſt whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmoſt force, under the conduct of the great Pompey [179].

Famine and peſtilence.

Our habits of thinking ſo fondly connect the order of the univerſe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of hiſtory has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkneſs, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated [180]. But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more ſerious kind. It was the inevitable conſequence of rapine and oppreſſion, which extirpated the produce of the preſent, and the hope of future harveſts. Famine is almoſt always followed by epidemical diſeaſes, the effect of ſcanty and unwholeſome food. Other cauſes muſt however have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and ſixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almoſt every family, of the Roman empire. During ſome time five thouſand perſons died daily in Rome; and many towns, that had eſcaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated [181].

Diminution of the human ſpecies.

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumſtance, of ſome uſe perhaps in the melan-

179 See Cellarius, Geogr. Antiq. tom. ii. p. 137. upon the limits of Iſauria.

180 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 177.

181 Hiſt. Auguſt. p. 177. Zoſimus, l. i. p. 24. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 623. Euſeb. Chronicon. Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæſar. Eutropius, ix. 5. Oroſius, vii. 21.

choly

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cholý calculation of human calamities. An exact regiſter was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the diſtribution of corn. It was found, that the ancient number of thoſe compriſed between the ages of forty and ſeventy, had been equal to the whole ſum of claimants, from fourteen to fourſcore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus [182]. Applying this authentic fact to the moſt correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves, that above half the people of Alexandria had periſhed; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might ſuſpect, that war, peſtilence, and famine, had conſumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human ſpecies [183].

[182] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. vii. 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionyſius, who, in the time of thoſe troubles, was biſhop of Alexandria.

[183] In a great number of pariſhes 11,000 perſons were found between fourteen and eighty; 5365 between forty and ſeventy. See Buffon, Hiſtoire Naturelle, tom. ii. p. 590.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Printed by A. Strahan, Printers Street, London.



